MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE *ZAMINDARS* OF BIHAR

Tahir Hussain Ansari

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This volume looks at the prominent chieftaincies of the suba of Bihar like Kharagpur, Bhojpur, Palamau, Gidhaur, Khokhra, Darbhanga, Champaran (Betia Raj) and Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj) and presents the biographies of their chieftains to understand their relationship with the Mughal Empire from the period of Akbar to Aurangzeb and their power and position during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It takes into consideration only those *zamindars* who enjoyed autonomous control over their possessions.

The volume examines the origin and growth of these chieftaincies and the manner of their subjugation as well as the nature of overlordship established by the Mughals over them. It also discusses the career and achievements of the chiefs at the Mughal court, particularly their appointments, awards of *mansabs,* promotions and so on.

The study is divided into ten chapters including Introduction and Conclusion. After the introduction, the next eight chapters are devoted to the study of chieftaincies. The ninth chapter is related to Hathwa Raj, which also includes a brief study of other chieftaincies like Panchet, Seor, Garhi, Ratanpur, Ramnagar, Ramgarh, Bhagwanpur, Chai and Kahalgaon.

The volume provides a complex portrait of the chieftains of Bihar and their relationship with the Mughal Empire as well as their role in the consolidation and expansion of the Mughal Empire in India.

Tahir Hussain Ansari is Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Assam University, Diphu Campus, Assam. His main area of research is political, social and economic history of Mughal Bihar during sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

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TAHIR HUSSAIN ANSARI

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MANOHAR

To
My Beloved Parents
Abdul Sattar & R. Khatoon

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Diphu TAHIR HUSSAIN ANSARI

Abbreviations

ASB	Asiatic Society of Bengal
BPP	*Bengal Past and Present*
IESHR	*Indian Economic and Social History Review*
IHR	*Indian Historical Review*
IHRC	Indian Historical Record Commission
JASB	*Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JBORS	*Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*
JBRS	*Journal of Bihar Research Society*
JPRS	*Journal of Pakistan Research Society*
KPJRI	Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute
PIHC	Proceedings of Indian History Congress

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

During the Mughal period, we find references to a large number of territorial chiefs in almost every part of northern India. Locally, they were known as *rajas, ranas, rais, raos, rawats*, etc., while in the contemporary and near-contemporary Persian chronicles, they have been referred to as *zamindars* and *marzabans*, usually as *kalantaran* and *buzurg*.[1] These were mostly hereditary chiefs who ruled over their respective territories.[2] In short, these autonomous or semi-autonomous *zamindars* constituted an important element in medieval Indian polity. They commanded not only a considerable part of the economic resources of the empire but also military power. After the conquest of Hindustan, Emperor Babur informs us that one-sixth of his total revenues came from the territories of these chiefs. He writes:

> The revenue of the countries now held by me (1528 ad) from Bhira to Bihar is fifty-two crores as will be known in detail. Eight or nine crores of this are from the *parganas* of *rais* and the *rajas* who have submitted in the past (to the Sultans of Delhi), receive allowance and maintenance.[3]

According to Arif Qandhari, one of the contemporary historians of Akbar's reign, there were two or three hundred *rajas* and *zamindars* that were for long in possession of strong forts.[4] Each of them commanded an army of their own, generally consisting of their clansmen, and the total numbers of their troops as Abul Fazl, the famous court historian of Akbar, tells us, stood at 47,00,000, comprising 3,84,558 cavalry, 42,77,057 infantry, 1,863 elephants, 4,260 guns and 4,500 boats.[5]

William Harrison Moreland was the first historian to draw our attention to the importance of the chiefs in medieval India. He defined *zamindars* as 'vassal chiefs'. He also pointed out that they could not exist in territories under the direct control of the Mughal state.[6] However, according to him, Bengal was an exception to this practice.[7] After him, Parmatma Saran in his work, *Provincial Government of the Mughals 1526–1658*, has highlighted the position and role of the

chieftains in the Mughal Empire by listing the principalities of a few of them. He also defined *zamindar* as 'vassal chiefs' and, like Moreland, also believed that they could not be found in all parts of the empire.[8] But Irfan Habib, who, on the basis of the study of *Ain-i-Akbari*, pointed out that the *zamindars* were to be found in every part of the empire, questioned this opinion.[9] Actually, Moreland committed this mistake because of an error in Heinrich Blochmann's standard edition of the *Ain-i Akbari*. Blochmann did not reproduce the statistics under the Account of the Twelve Provinces in their original tabular form. He not only dispensed with the columns of the original tables but also dropped, without any explanation, the column headings. Moreland, therefore, could not notice the names of the castes entered against each *pargana* in these tables, which belonged to a column headed '*zamindar*' in the manuscript.[10]

As a result of this mistake, Moreland assumed that the *zamindars* were not found in all parts of the empire. However, Irfan Habib, in a chapter on the *zamindars* in his book, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, made a detailed discussion on the rights, privileges, genesis and the composition of the *zamindars* in general. He also mentioned the two categories of *zamindars*: the autonomous chiefs who enjoyed 'sovereign power' in their territories and the ordinary *zamindars* who exercised superior rights in land and functioned as collectors of land revenue.[11]

Nurul Hasan accepted the universal character of the *zamindars*, and described the position and the role of the chiefs in the Mughal Empire. However, he divided the *zamindars* into three categories: (i) the autonomous chiefs, (ii) the intermediary *zamindars*, and (iii) the primary *zamindars*.[12] Discussing the features of the autonomous chiefs, the theme of the present work, he observed that the Mughals admitted a large number of chiefs in the imperial service by conferring *mansab*, important governorships and military commands. They asserted the principle, which came to be known as that of 'Paramountcy', according to which they reserved to themselves the right of recognizing the successor of a deceased *raja*, thus making a chieftain dependent for his position on the goodwill of the emperor rather than on his inherent rights. They also imposed the obligation of military service upon the chieftains but they were not granted *mansabs*. Moreover, they entered into a direct relationship with the chieftains, reduced their powers and created a new class of allies. They also attempted to treat the hereditary dominions of the autonomous chiefs as *watan jagir*, which meant that, theoretically, they were supposed to have the status of *jagirdar*. Finally, they succeeded in compelling the autonomous chiefs to confirm to imperial regulations, especially with regard to the maintenance of law and order and the freedom of

transit, as well as claiming the right to dispense justice to those who appealed to the imperial government against their chiefs.[13] Hasan also touches upon the different roles the chiefs must have played in the economic and cultural life of the country before and after their submission to the Mughals. However, his observations, based as they are on a general survey of the Mughal Empire covering a period of about 150 years, need a close region-wise and period-wise scrutiny before they can be accepted.[14]

Ahsan Raza Khan in his book, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar*, has tried to analyse the position and powers of the chieftains of the *Akbari* provinces of Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Gujarat, Ajmer, Malwa, Agra, Oudh, Allahabad, Bihar and Bengal, and their relation with the Mughal imperial authority.[15] He has identified the principalities of the various chiefs and then examined the manner of their subjugation and the nature of overlordship established by the Mughals over them. Khan has indeed made an in-depth study of the *zamindars* but his study is only confined to the reign of Akbar and, besides, it is in the nature of a general survey, as he had covered the *zamindars* of Akbar's entire period. Another shortcoming of his study is that it is mainly based on Persian chronicles with the exception of a few Rajasthani sources. Hence, the picture of the *zamindars* and their problem is from the perspective of the imperial court. The reaction of the *zamindars* towards the imperial policy adopted with regard to them hardly finds any place in the chronicles. Besides, it may also be pointed that barring a few articles and research papers, no detailed study of the *zamindars* of a particular region or of a (Mughal) *suba*, including Bihar, has been made of the Mughal period so far.

The present study is my doctoral research work, which gives detailed accounts of the *zamindars* of Bihar and their relationship with the Mughals from the time of Akbar to the death of Aurangzeb. After the acceptance of my thesis for publication, I extended the period of my study uptil the nineteenth century. Besides, I have also consulted a number of local Persian sources, including family records, in the preparation of the present work. However, unlike the *zamindars* of the *suba* of Ajmer, for whom we have a large number of source material, information about the *zamindars* of Bihar is very little both in Persian chronicles as well as in local records.

The first problem in this regard, was to identify the prominent *zamindar* families of Bihar. No detailed study of this nature had been attempted so far. Another problem faced during the course of this study was, as mentioned above, the paucity of source material about the *zamindars* of Bihar, particularly regarding their relations with the Mughal court after their acceptance of their subordination to the imperial authority. However, we have been able to identify

Kharagpur, Bhojpur, Palamau, Gidhaur, Kokhra, Darbhanga, Champaran (Betia Raj), Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj), Panchet, Seor, etc., as important chieftaincies of the Bihar *suba*. Some of these were very large with a group of *parganas* under their sway, while others were so small that they held only a part of a *pargana*. Nevertheless, the information on their relation with the Mughal administration was so little that it was not possible to make a correct assessment of their position in the Mughal political structure. Therefore, I decided to prepare detailed biographical accounts of each of the well-known chieftaincies, including biographies of their chieftains on the basis of information collected from all possible sources: contemporary, near-contemporary and later Persian sources, European travel accounts, local sources, family records, survey reports and district gazetteers. I was able to get a lot of information on their relations with the imperial government and, in my concluding chapter, in the light of this information; I have discussed the relationship of the *zamindars* of Bihar with the Mughal administration in detail. It may, however, be added that I have taken into consideration only those *zamindars* who enjoyed autonomous control over their possessions.

It is now important to briefly discuss the geography of the Bihar *suba* with particular reference to the areas under the control of the chieftaincies. Abul Fazl records that the area of the *suba* of Bihar from Gardhi[16] to Rohtas was about 120 *kos* (300 miles) and its breadth from Tirhut to the northern mountains (Himalayas) was 110 *kos* (275 miles). On its eastern boundary was the *suba* of Bengal and to its west were the *suba* of Allahabad and Awadh. On the north and south, it was bounded by hills comprising the Himalayas and Vindhyas, respectively.[17] Abul Fazl does not mention any *suba* bordering the *suba* of Bihar in the north and south. It seems that because of the hilly tract and forest areas on both sides of the *suba*, Abul Fazl failed to mention the name of any territorial unit to its north and south, although Nepal lies to its north and Orissa (Odisha) to its south. Some of the important rivers that flowed across Bihar were the Ganga, Sone, Maner, Gandak, Karmanasa and Punpun.[18]

The *suba* of Bihar had seven *sarkars*, which were divided into 199 *parganas*. During the reign of Akbar, the *suba* was divided into two broad and equal portions of territory, north and south of the river Ganga. The northern territory was a vast tract of flat land and it comprised the Saran, Champaran, Hajipur and Tirhut *sarkars*. Tirhut, being the most easterly, contained a strip of lands adjacent to the north of the course of the Ganga in north Bihar and formed the part of the *sarkar* of Munger. The latter chiefly lay to the south of the Ganga.[19]

The southern territory lay to the south of the Ganga and extended to

the range of Vindhyas, which separated the lower plains from the elevated mountainous region. In the west, the southern territory was separated by the river from the *sarkar* of Chunar in the *suba* of Allahabad. On the east, it was separated from Bengal by a branch of the southern hills. The *sarkar* of Bihar in the middle cover about half of the flat and level area of this great southerly division. The plains of the *sarkar* of Munger to the east covered a fourth of the entire district with all its mountainous dependencies. The southern and western *sarkar* of Rohtas was situated chiefly between the two rivers of Sone and Karmanasa. Subsequently, the *sarkar* of Shahabad (Bhojpur) was carved out of the *sarkar* of Rohtas.[20]

The southernmost region of the Bihar *suba* was upland of Chota Nagpur, which comprised the sub-division of Palamau, Ramgarh and Chota Nagpur. Chota Nagpur is also known by the appellation of Khokhra, more commonly called Nagpur. John Beams is of the view that the name Nagpur was derived from the diamond mine in the region.[21] It may be pointed out that the entire region was not included in any of the *sarkars* of the *suba* of Bihar apparently because the *zamindars* of the area could not be fully subjugated.

A general survey of the geographical distribution of chieftaincies in Bihar shows that most of them were located in the peripheral regions, amidst forests and the hilly tracts of south Bihar. For example, the chieftaincies of Kokhra and Palamau were located in south Bihar and were full of forests. The hilly tracts of Munger had the largest number of principalities, such as Kharagpur, Gidhaur, and Seor. Similarly, the principalities of Hathwa and Betia Raj in north Bihar were situated, by and large, in those regions of Saran and Champaran where the forest abounded. The territory of the Ujjainias of Bhojpur was also full of forests. The remarks of Mannucci and Palsaert, the European travellers, that the tracts ruled by the *rajas* and the 'princely' *zamindars* in Hindustan are usually to be found only behind mountains and in forests seem in complete agreement with the geographical distribution of the chieftaincies in Bihar.[22] Even the eighteenth-century Persian chronicle *Siyar-ul- Mutakherin* gives a vivid picture of the forests in north Bihar:

> No man that has not seen the forests of India can have an idea of the darkness and horror by which a visitor is at once surrounded. Lofty trees eternally green, growing close together, intercept not only the light of the sun, but the very sight of the sky. Not a leaf is seen moving, not a bird is seen hopping about, save some crows; and chirping is as unknown there as would be an organ touched by a Handel. Such are the *sal* forests that bound Bengal on the north. Myriads of red ants, still more formidable by their enormous bigness than by their voracity, seem as well as stupendous serpents, to be the only inhabitants of those lonely woods, that is, the western ones.[23]

This thesis is divided into ten chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. After the introduction, the next eight chapters are devoted to the study of chieftaincies. The ninth chapter is related to the Hathwa Raj, which also includes a brief study of other chieftaincies like Panchet, Seor, Garhi, Ratanpur, Ramnagar, Ramgarh, Bhagwanpur, Chai and Kahalgaon. To understand in better way the chieftain's relationship with the Mughal Empire I have prepared detailed political biographies of the chieftains, especially from the time of Akbar to Aurangzeb's reign including the events of the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan. A short history of these chieftaincies during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been also mentioned. While describing about the chieftains, I have noted all the developments that have taken place in their chieftaincies, in and around the Bihar *suba* and at the imperial court. I have also discussed the career and achievements of the chiefs at the Mughal court, particularly their appointments, awards of *mansabs*, promotions and so on. I have particularly mentioned the nature of the relationship established after the chieftains accepted the overlordship of the Mughal imperial authority.

In the preparation of this thesis, I have consulted almost all the available Persian sources in print as well as in manuscript form. I have also used a number of official documents, such as imperial *farmans, nishans* and *hasbul hukms* issued by the Mughal emperors and the princes. European travel accounts have also been used with utmost care. Barring the reign of Akbar, information provided by Persian sources on the reign of Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb and the later Mughal period is fragmented. Similarly, only brief references to a few chieftaincies are available in European travel accounts. Therefore, I have also consulted a large number of family records and regional histories, housed in the Bihar State Archives, Patna; Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna; K.P. Jayaswal Research Insti-tute, Patna; Patna University Library, Patna; and *Mahafiz Khana* of Darbhanga Raj, Darbhanga. Some family accounts, such as *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia, Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj Darbhanga, Bhojpur mein Paramaron ka Itihas 1577 tak* and *Ain-i Tirhut* have greatly helped me in filling in the gaps and reconstructing the history of some of the chieftaincies. Apart from these works, I have also consulted District and Imperial Gazetteers, several Survey Reports, Montgomery Martin's book, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, vol. II, and W.K. Firminger's *The Fifth Report from the Selected Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company with Glossary*, London, 1812–13, vol. III, Francis Buchanan's *An Account of the District of Patna and Gaya, An Account of the District of Bhagalpur* (some other districts accounts also), William Wilson Hunter's, *The Statistical Accounts of Bengal* (20 vols.),

etc. Research papers and books published in English, Hindi and Urdu on the theme connected with my topic has also been used in the preparation of the present study.

NOTES

1. Abul Fazl in *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulawi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1877.
2. Ahsan Raza Khan, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977, p. 1.
3. Babur, *Baburnama*, tr. Annette Susannah Beveridge, London, Oxford University Press, 1921, pp. 520–1.
4. Arif Qandhari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari* or *Tarikh-i-Arif Qandhari*, ed. Muinuddin Nadvi, Azhar Ali Dihlawi and Imtiaz Ali Arshi, Rampur, Raza Library, 1962, p. 47.
5. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, vol. I, p. 120.
6. William Harrison Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Cambridge, W. Heffer & Sons, 1929, pp. 122, 279.
7. Ibid., pp. 191–4.
8. Parmatma Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals 1526–1658*, Allahabad, The Allahabad Law Press Kitabistan, 1941, p. 111.
9. Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of the Mughal India 1556–1707*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 169–75.
10. In the original tables, there are eight columns with the following headings: *Parganat* (parganas), *Qila* (forts), *Arazi* (measured area), *Nagdi* (revenue stated in cash), *Suyurghal* (revenue grants), *Zamindar* (or *Bumi*), *Sawar* (cavalry) and *Piyada* (infantry). In Heinrich Blochmann's edition, all the headings are omitted, except for *Suyurghal, Sawar* and *Piyada* (Irfan Habib, ibid., pp. 170–1).
11. Ibid. pp. 147–89.
12. Nurul Hasan, 'The Position of the *Zamindar* in the Mughal Empire', *IESHR*, vol. 1, no. 4, Delhi, 1964, pp. 107–19.
13. Ibid.
14. Ahsan Raza Khan, *The Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977, p. 7.
15. Ibid. 167–76.
16.

Gardhi is the old fort now known as Teliagarhi, a little to the west of Sahibganj, at the point where the Santhal hills touch the Ganga.

17. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, vol. II, p. 66.

18. Ibid.

19. John Beams, 'Subah Bihar: Fifth Report to the House of Common's in England ad 1812', in B.P. Ambasthya, ed., *Beames's Contribution to the Political Geography of the Subahs of Awadh, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in the Age of Akbar*, Patna, Janaki Prakashan, 1976, p. 42.

20. Ibid., pp. 42–4.

21. Ibid., pp. 43–4.

22. Nicolaio Manucci, *Storia do Mogor, 1656–1712*, tr. W. Irvine, Indian Texts Series, London, John Murray, 1907–8, vol. II, p. 444. Also Francisco Pelsaert, 'Remonstrantie', *c*. 1626, in D.H.A. Kolff and W.H. van Santen, eds., *De geschriften van Francisco Pelsaert over Mughal Indie*, 1627, Kroniek en Remonstrantie ('S- Gravenhage, 1979), pp. 243–335; tr., W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, *Jahangir's India*, rpt., Delhi, 1972, pp. 58–9.

23. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Champaran*, Patna, Superintendent, Government Printing Bihar and Orissa, 1938, pp. 26f.

CHAPTER 2

The Kharagpur Raj

Kharagpur was one of the most important chieftaincies of Bihar during the Mughal period. Presently, it is a small village in the Munger subdivision, situated close to the flank of the Kharagpur hills, about 21 miles south-east of the town of Munger and 12 miles from the railway station of Bariarpur.[1] The exact area under the domination of the Kharagpur Raj during the Mughal period is not mentioned in any of the contemporary chronicles but from a *farman* of Jahangir,[2] it appears that the chieftaincy comprised the *parganas* of Haveli Kharagpur and Sakhrabad, which included places such as Parbatpore, Chandori, Kathuria, Chandure, Passai Sathiori, Godda, Damre, Sankhwara Hazar Tuki, Humduo and Amlu Muliya.[3] Abul Fazl mentions Raja Sangram Singh as the *zamindar* of Kharagpur and identifies Kharagpur as a *qasba* in the *Akbarnama*.[4] But in his work it does not find place in the *mahals* (a revenue subdivision) of the *sarkar* of Bihar or of the *sarkar* of Munger. However, some modern writers are of the view that the chieftaincy of Kharagpur was in the *sarkar* of Munger.[5] According to local traditions, the entire area under the domination of the Kharagpur chiefs was originally held by an aboriginal tribe called the Khetauris and the rulers were around fifty two tribal chiefs of Khetauri.[6] Sometime in the beginning of the sixteenth century, three Rajput brothers named Dandu Rai, Basdeo Rai and Mahender Rai took service under Raja Sasanka, the Khetauri chief of Kherhi, a small principality some 10 or 12 miles south-east of Munger. In due course these three brothers collected a large following of their clansmen, recruited military retainers and rose in revolt against their master. They murdered the *raja* and his family members, and assumed power. Soon after, in a series of battles, they successfully defeated all the fifty-two Khetauri chiefs and Dandu Rai, the eldest of the three brothers, established himself as the territorial chief of the entire Kharagpur region, which comprised fifty-three villages with an estimated area of 190.6 square miles.[7]

Dandu Rai ruled for twenty-two years and died in 1525,[8] leaving

behind his two sons, Rup Shahi and Narendra Shahi. Rup Shahi (1525–39), the older son, succeeded to the throne and Narendra Shahi continued as the ruler of Baikat with its headquarters at Kharahi.[9] Rup Shahi ruled for fourteen years. On his death in 1539, his eldest son Sangram Singh became the ruler of the chieftaincy.[10] An authentic history of the Kharagpur chieftaincy, however, begins only after the accession of Sangram Singh.[11] From now onwards, we start getting references to the chieftaincy in contemporary historical accounts.

The first reference to Sangram Singh in the sources occurs in the events of 1573–4 when Akbar went to Patna along with Munim Khan to suppress the Afghan rebellion. Abul Fazl writes that the Afghans could not withstand the Mughal troops and fled without offering battle. After that Raja Sangram Singh, the *zamindar* of Kharagpur and many other *zamindars* of the *suba* of Bihar presented themselves before the emperor and offered their submission.[12] However, on what terms and condition the offer of submission was accepted has not been mentioned by any of the contemporary sources, including the *Akbarnama*.

The next reference that we have in our sources relates to the events of 1580–1 when Raja Todar Mal was dispatched to suppress the rebellion of Masum Khan Kabuli, who had established himself in the region of Munger near the chieftaincy of Kharagpur. Abul Fazl tells us that Khwaja Shamsuddin, who was captured by Masum Khan Kabuli and was languishing in custody, was helped by Arab Bahadur, an accomplice of the rebels, to escape and seek shelter with Raja Sangram Singh. Shortly afterwards, other imperialists also escaped and came to Kharagpur, and an army of 12,000 *sawars* assembled to challenge the rebels.[13] About this time, reinforcements under Raja Todar Mal also reached there. In the offensive that was launched against the rebels, Masum Khan Kabuli was defeated. Although the *Akbarnama* makes no direct reference to Raja Sangram Singh having joined the imperial army in the war against the rebels, the fact that the imperialists were given shelter in Kharagpur, where they reassembled and launched an offensive against the rebels, clearly indicates that Raja Sangram Singh played an important role in the suppression of this rebellion. Todar Mal was so pleased with his support at this crucial juncture that he styled Raja Sangram Singh his *farzand* (son).[14]

In 1583–4, the Afghans under Masum Khan Farkhandi unfurled the banner of rebellion once again and expelled the imperial officers. Shahbaz Khan Kamboh was specially deputed to suppress the rebellion. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, Dalpat Ujjainiya of Bhojpur and certain other chieftains of the *suba* of Bihar came out openly to help Shahbaz Khan in his effort. Abul Fazl writes that

although Masum Khan Farakhandi was not captured, the rebels were defeated with the help of local chiefs, and their power declined considerably.[15]

Although several local chiefs joined together in helping the imperial army suppress the Afghan rebels, they were extremely hostile towards each other. Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, the two neighbouring chiefs were bitter enemies on account of some family feud.[16] Puran Mal succeeded in winning over the friendship of Shahbaz Khan and launched an attack on Kharagpur with his help, forcing Raja Sangram Singh to seek shelter in the forest ravines. Puran Mal, after this victory, became quite powerful in the entire region. However, shortly afterwards, an unfortunate incident suddenly changed the whole situation in favour of Raja Sangram Singh.

Abul Fazl writes that a Rajput retainer, who was in the service of Puran Mal and had recently, left him and joined Raja Sangram Singh, plotted to kill Shahbaz Khan and actually committed the crime by killing a person that he mistakenly assumed to be Shahbaz Khan. When Shahbaz Khan came to know of the incident, he became suspicious of Puran Mal and immediately imprisoned him.[17] Although Puran Mal was not involved and got the assailant arrested and killed, as soon as he came to know of the incident, but he lost the confidence and favour of Shahbaz Khan. Shortly after, Shahbaz Khan was transferred to Bengal and Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashhadi was dispatched from Awadh to take charge of Bihar. As a consequence of these developments, Raja Sangram Singh was able to re-establish himself in Kharagpur.

Our sources hardly make any reference about the activities of Raja Sangram Singh and Raja Puran Mal during the governorship of Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashhadi and Said Khan (July 1585–August 1587). But later evidence suggests that the two became independent and continued to defy imperial authority during these years.

In 1587, Raja Man Singh was appointed the governor of Bihar. Abul Fazl writes that he administered Bihar very competently and, as a consequence, refractory chiefs became obedient.[18] He particularly mentions that Raja Man Singh forced Raja Sangram Singh and Raja Puran Mal to accept the overlordship of the Mughals and offer *peshkash* (tribute) of elephants and other rarities of the area.[19] He further adds that during Raja Man Singh's conquest of Orissa in 1592, Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and certain other chiefs of Bihar accompanied him.[20]

Raja Sangram Singh remained loyal to the Mughals till the death of Akbar (1605). But taking advantage of the accession crisis, he attempted to regain his independence once again. Jahangir, in his

memoirs, writes that Raja Sangram Singh collected an army of 4,000 troopers and a large number of foot soldiers and came out openly to challenge the imperial authority.[21] Baz Bahadur, the governor of Bihar, took immediate action and in a battle fought in Kharagpur, the *raja* was killed and the rebels were completely defeated.[22] The same incident on the authority of local traditions has been discussed differently by William Wilson Hunter in his famous work *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, 1875, vol. 15. He writes that Jahangir, having come to know of the rebellious activities at Kharagpur, issued an order to Raja Sangram Singh to present himself at the court in Delhi. As the order was ignored, the emperor directed Jahangir Quli Khan, the *subedar* of Bihar to suppress the rebels. Baz Bahadur,[23] a well-known commander, was dispatched to Kharagpur. Raja Sangram Singh assembled his soldiers and positioned himself at Markan, a place leading to the latter capital. The battle continued for several days without any success. While these operations were in progress, a foot soldier in the service of Raja Sangram Singh went over to the enemy's camp and offered to assassinate his chief for a price. The offer was immediately accepted by the imperialists.

The paid assassin carried out his job successfully and the *raja* was killed. The death of the *raja* threw his army into total confusion but when they were about to flee, Rani Chandrajot, the wife of the deceased *raja*, encouraged them to stand their ground. She raised her son, Toral Mal, to the throne and continued the struggle for several months. Baz Bahadur, unsure of his victory, became desperate to end the contest with this woman and agreed to a compromise. He promised to intercede on her behalf provided that she and her son agreed to present themselves before the emperor. The *rani* accepted the proposal and accompanied him to Delhi. But as soon as they reached Delhi, Toral Mal was imprisoned.[24] However, on the request of Baz Bahadur, he was released and presented before the emperor. The emperor was highly impressed with Toral Mal's charming manners and excellent ways of conversation. He was treated very well at the court and induced to change his religion, which he agreed to do. He was given the title of Roz Afzun and was married to the daughter of a noble.[25]

In *Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj*, the same incident is described with more details. The *Tawarikh* mentions that Baz Bahadur (Jahangir Quli Khan) proceeded with a large army to punish the rebel and reached Marg Ghat near Kharagpur, where several clashes took place. But as the royal army failed to defeat the rebel, Baz Bahadur, through dubious means, won over a relative of the *raja* to kill him.[26] Although the entire story might not be true, the substance of the account is corroborated by contemporary evidence. From the *Tuzuk*, it is clear

that Raja Sangram was killed in the battle and his son was converted to Islam, and given the title of Roz Afzun.[27]

Montgomery Martin, on the basis of some local traditions, also discusses the event but adds that Toral Mal was appointed as a *morchulburdar* (person who fans the king with peacock feathers) after being released and, during the course of his presence at court, killed a tiger single handedly with a sword in a hunting expedition. The king was greatly impressed with his achievement, raised him to the position of a high noble, and converted him and his three sons to Islam.[28] The *raja* was given the name of Raja Roz Afzun and was married to a daughter of Baz Bahadur. The young lady however, considered this marriage highly degrading and refused to honour it. Roz Afzun's unhappy mother complained to the king of these developments. Martin makes us believe that on the complaint of the *rani*, the emperor married Raja Roz Afzun to the daughter of Prince Murad Bakhsh and raised him to the rank of 3,000. His two sons were also given the rank of 1,000 each. The youngest son became a hermit and obtained two *mauzas* in rent-free grant. The emperor also assigned the *parganas* of Haveli and Kajra as *sanak* (table expense), and parts of Kharagpur as *altamgha* (a grant of land produce given by emperor to a lady for her maintenance). A *mauza* was also fixed as *jagir* for the family. Besides, Raja Roz Afzun and his family were authorized to collect various cesses *(rusum-i- zamindari*) which included *milkiat, chanda, kanungo, nakudi* and *nankar*.[29] The *raja*, after obtaining these favours was allowed to visit his *watan* (chieftainey) and his second son obtained the office of *morchulbardar*.[30] Lal and Hunter, as mentioned earlier, have also noted that Toral Mal was married to Murad Bakhsh's daughter, a cousin of Jahangir, and have given her name as Bega Sultana.[31] Hunter further writes that it is commonly believed that she was not a royal princess but belonged to a respected family.[32] He also tells us that after the marriage, Jahangir issued a *farman* appointing Roz Afzun as the *raja* of Kharagpur, investing him with the authority and rights of *milki, chaudhari*, and *kanungo* with all *rusum* or dues in Kharagpur, and one-eighth of *pargana* Sahrui as subsistence *zamindari* or *nankar*. At the same time *pargana* Haveli Kharagpur was allotted to him to support a fitting establishment as well as *pargana* Kujra as *altamgha jagir*. The *parganas* of Sakhrabadi Parbatpara, Chanda Katuria, Chandwa Parsai, Sathiari, Godda, Danra Sakhwara, Hazar Tuki, Handwa and Amlu Mutiya were also given as *altamgha jagirs* to his older son. His third son, Thakur Sinh, who became a hermit, was assigned 4,040 *bighas* of land in the villages of Betia and Agia in *pargana* Hazar Tuki in *madad-i-mash* (land grant for subsistence). Soon afterwards, Toral Mal returned to Kharagpur with his wife, leaving his son, Abdul Shah, at court, as a hostage to ensure his fidelity.[33]

The above information is only partially corroborated by the *Tuzuk* and other contemporary sources, and, therefore, needs some explanation. The *Tuzuk* tells us that after the suppression of the revolt and the killing of Raja Sangram Singh, the territory of Kharagpur was first assigned to Islam Khan for a year in *inam* and, thereafter, to Afzal Khan who was appointed as the governor of Bihar.[34] After that, we have no information about Kharagpur until 1615 when Jahangir writes that Raja Roz Afzun who was one of the princes (*Raja Zadhai Muatabar Suba-Bihar*) of Bihar and who had been one of the permanent servants of the court from his youth, having been honoured by admission into Islam,[35] was made *raja* of the dominion of his father, Raja Sangram Singh. He was given an elephant and ordered to go to his native place.[36]

It seems that there is an element of exaggeration in local traditions about his marriage with Murad's daughter, which Hunter himself doubts.[37] However, the other details are largely corroborated.[38] For example, the details of assignments, when compared to the *farman* of Jahangir referred to on the first page of this chapter, confirms almost the same area having been granted to Sangram Singh.

Thereafter, we only have two references to Raja Roz Afzun during the reign of Jahangir and both relate to the period of Prince Khurram's revolt (future Shah Jahan). The relations of Khurram with the court, which were already strained due to his reluctance to proceed to Qandhar immediately (as the Persians had attacked over Qandhar in 1622 and Jahangir wanted that Khurram should proceed to avert their invasion on Qandhar. However, Khurram showed his unwillingness to move there, rather he put some conditions before Jahangir for taking expedition against the Persians), were further complicated because of his rashness in connection with the issue of an assignment of *jagir*. Some time after the occupation of Qandhar when the preparation for the mobilization of an army was on and Khurram was ordered to proceed with the army, he applied for the assignment of the *jagir* of Dholpur *pargana*. Before the order could be issued, Nur Jahan, the wife of Jahangir, got the order issued in favour of Prince Shahriyar, son of Jahangir, who deputed Sharif-ul-Mulk, the *faujdar* of Dholpur, to take charge of the *jagir*. Khurram, on the other hand, being sure of getting the *jagir* assigned to him, sent Darya Khan to take the charge of it. When Darya Khan reached Dholpur, he was challenged by Sharif-ul-Mulk and, as a consequence, a battle was fought in which the latter was defeated and expelled from Dholpur.[39]

This action of Khurram was an open defiance of imperial authority. Jahangir became extremely unhappy but as the situation was serious, instead of taking any tough decision, he dispatched Raja Roz Afzun to enquire as to why the prince had taken such a bold step. Raja Roz

Afzun was also ordered to behave properly and with politeness.[40] It seems that the mission was not very successful and Roz Afzun returned to court.

Soon afterwards, Khurram rebelled openly. Raja Roz Afzun was now sent to summon Prince Pervez immediately to the court to lead a campaign against the rebel prince.[41] We have no other reference to the *raja* during the later years of Jahangir's reign. At the end of Jahangir's reign, Raja Roz Afzun only held the rank of 1,500/700.[42]

After the accession of Shah Jahan, Raja Roz Afzun was confirmed in his *zamindari*, and, in 1628, was deputed with Mahabat Khan, an important noble of Jahangir, against Nazar Muhammad Khan Uzbeg, the ruler of Balkh[43] who had invaded Afghanistan and besieged the fort of Kabul. The Mughal commander of Kabul, Khanjar Khan, fought bravely and resisted the onslaught of the Uzbegs for some time. The emperor, being informed of the continued pressure of the Uzbegs, appointed Mahabat Khan and Lashkar Khan to take charge of the Kabul *suba*. When Nazar Muhammad came to know of these developments, he raised the siege of Kabul and retreated to his country. The news of Nazar Muhammad's withdrawal was reported to Mahabat Khan at Sirhind, where he stopped to await further instructions from the court. Shortly afterwards, the emperor ordered him to return to court.[44] It appears that Raja Roz Afzun also returned to court along with Mahabat Khan.

Raja Roz Afzun accompanied Mahabat Khan once again to suppress the rebellion of Jujhar Singh Bundela at Bundelkhand (1628–9).[45] A number of leading nobles such as Islam Khan, Khan-i-Jahan and Abdullah Khan were also ordered to accompany Mahabat Khan. The emperor himself marched to Gwalior on 3 January 1629. The Mughal forces devasted the Bundelkhand region where the rebel had taken refuge. The rebel forces fought bravely but 3,000 of them were slain and the Mughals captured Iraj. As dissatisfaction arose among his own people, Jujhar Singh Bundela was compelled to sue for peace. At the request of Mahabat Khan, the emperor pardoned the offences of the rebel Raja. Jujhar Singh agreed to pay Rs. 1.5 million as war indemnity and forty elephants as *peshkash*.[46]

Sometime after the end of his rebellion, another very senior noble Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, rebelled and escaped to the Deccan after creating confusion in north India for a long time. The emperor dispatched a large army to punish him.[47] Raja Roz Afzun was also deputed to serve under Iradat Khan, who was given the overall command of the operation. It seems that Roz Afzun played an important role in the suppression of the rebellion because 100 *sawars* were added to his rank after the campaign was over, in reward for his meritorious service.[48]

Raja Roz Afzun was again sent to the Deccan in 1633–4 under Prince Shuja.[49] Mahabat Khan met Prince Shuja on the way and advised him to march directly to Parenda.[50] The prince, along with Raja Roz Afzun and other nobles, besieged the fort of Parenda. Raja Roz Afzun fought bravely and forced Shahji Bhonsle, the Maratha *sardar*, to go back to Junair. A number of the *raja's* retainers were killed in the battle.[51]

Raja Roz Afzun died sometimes in 1635.[52] At the time, he held the rank of 2,000/1,000.[53]

He was a very important chieftain of Bihar, and played an important role in the consolidation and expansion of the Mughal empire. He enjoyed the confidence of both emperor, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. On two occasions, as mentioned earlier, he was sent by the emperor to Prince Khurram with his message when the latter openly defied imperial authority. He was also asked to personally enquire as to why the prince had behaved in such an arrogant manner. Raja Roz Afzun not only served to help the Mughal authorities in and around Bihar but was also deputed to serve the imperial army in Kabul, Balkh and Deccan.

After the death of Raja Roz Afzun, his son Bahroz presented himself at court. Emperor Shah Jahan received him favourably and recognized him as the ruler of Kharagpur.[54] His brothers, Adil Singh and Thakur Singh, were apparently not admitted to imperial service. According to family records, Raja Bahroz, after succeeding to the throne of Kharagpur was dispatched to suppress the rebellion in Kabul. After the successful completion of the campaign, he was assigned *chakla* of Midnapur in *jagir*, as reward for his service in addition to his *watan*, where he built a town and named it Kharagpur.[55] However, he held the rank of 700/550 at the end of Shah Jahan's reign.[56] We do not find any reference to Raja Bahroz in the chronicles of Shah Jahan's reign. The local sources do not record his services to the imperial cause. However, we do find reference to Raja Bahroz during the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan.

As well known, Shah Jahan fell ill in September 1657 and his condition became critical within a few days. Dara Shikoh, his eldest son and whom Shah Jahan had also nominated as his successor, was present at court. He not only nursed his ailing father but also helped him in discharging the important affairs of the empire. Dara's brothers who were extremely jealous of his closeness to the emperor became suspicious of these developments. They believed that Shah Jahan had actually expired and that Dara Shikoh had usurped his throne. Therefore, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad, after reaching an understanding among themselves, proceeded towards Delhi to fight for the throne of Hindustan. The situation became so grave that the

Mughal nobility, too, was divided on the issue. Almost every important noble was allied with one or the other prince. The princes themselves approached the local chiefs for support with the promise of higher *mansabs* and important offices. The *zamindars* of Bihar, especially Raja Bahroz, the *raja* of Gidhaur and the *Ujjainia* chief, actually participated in this conflict in the region of Bihar. All of them were not in one camp, although Shah Shuja, who was the first to declare himself king and proceeded towards Delhi to contest Dara Shikoh, contacted some of these zamindars soon after reaching Patna. He was able to get the support of Raja Bahroz of Kharagpur and, through his help, the Ujjainia chief also joined his camp. To firm up the alliance, Shah Shuja also issued *farmans* and *nishans* with lots of assurances.[57] In one of the *nishans* issued on behalf of Shah Shuja, it was clearly mentioned that Raja Bahroz had managed to bring Amar Singh, a Ujjainia chief, to the side of Shah Shuja and this fact had been acknowledged by the prince.

The *nishan* runs as follows:

> The best of the peers and contemporaries, worthy of reviewing favors and privileges, Amar Singh, being duly honored with royal gifts may know that in the present time the fact of having upright faith and true intentions of the one (Amar Singh) accustomed to bravery, deserving of favors, privileges, gifts, and kindness, has been brought to the notice of enlightened and the holiest (Shuja) by Raja Bahroz who is noted for his bravery and valour. Therefore this order of high magnitude and conspicuous greatness reviewed the honour of being issued and dispatched to the effect that immediately on receipt of this high, auspicious and prosperous *Nishan* you (Amar Singh), being contented in every way, should come to the service of the wholly fortunate with or many means you can afford to collect so that after kissing the threshold you shall be rewarded with royal bounties and especial favours. Take this as urgent.' (Written in 1068 ah, 1658)

Dara Shikoh, on the other hand, was also making active efforts to get the support of important chiefs of the region and even issued a *farman* on behalf of Shah Jahan to the *raja* of Gidhaur with the promise of not only a high *mansab* but even the chieftaincy of Kharagpur Raj, if he so desired.[58] The *farman* runs as follows:

> The best among the grandees and the like beings, the great among the equals and the contemporaries, worthy of receiving favours and privileges, Raja Dal Singh, the zamindar of Gidhaur, being duly honoured with royal gifts, may know that in the present time the message of Sulaiman Shikoh Bahadur, the able and brave son, the fortunate and the well behaved, the all conquering and ever-fortunate by Lord's grace, the son of the ruling royal house, and of highest descent, having the blessings of God, the pearl of royal crown and of sublime Majesty, the star of sparkling wisdom and prudence, the cloud of showering generosity, privilege and power, ever-watering the flower of fortune, the all-embracing and all powerful prince expansive as sky, the good natured, reached (Dara) that he (Dal Singh) the best among the peers and contemporaries, under the guidance of the fortune, the faithful servant and the well-wisher of the empire, is treading the path of loyalty and would escort

the royal force through his land against the cowardly and the disrespectful Shuja who did not discriminate between right and wrong, and after duly punishing him (Shuja), would drive him (Shuja) out of Munger and its quarter and would thus force him to lead the life of adversity. This news proved highly agreeable to me (Dara), and he (Dal Singh) was assured that in return for this service of his (Dal Singh's) he (Dal Singh) would have access to the presence of the emperor and would review royal favours and rewards and a good *mansab* and a good title; if he (Dal Singh) would want to get hold of the zamindari of Kharagpur from the hands of the unfortunate Bahroz, I (Dara) would agree to it and that he (Dal Singh) might uproot him (Bahroz) and occupy his (Bahroz's) territory. He (Dal Singh) was directed to communicate his wish so that the emperor might actually announce the favour regarding him (Dal Singh) and my (Dara's) gifts would also continue in his favor in future. (Written on 21st of the month of Rajab, 1068 h (in April ad 1968).

In this way, a number of *zamindars* of Bihar joined the rebellious princes and participated in their war of succession. Raja Bahroz, as mentioned earlier, was on the side of Shuja along with the Ujjainia chief; however, in the battle fought at Bahadurpur on 14 February 1658, there is hardly any reference to their active participation.[59]

Shah Shuja, after being defeated at Bahadurpur, fled from the battlefield towards Munger and fortified the town to defend himself from the pursuing army. In this effort, he was greatly helped by Raja Bahroz. In the meantime, Sulaiman Shikoh, the elder son of Dara Shikoh, who was pursuing Shah Shuja, was informed of the defeat of Jaswant Singh an important Mughal noble, at the hands of Aurangzeb and Murad in the battle of Dharmat (fought on 15 April 1658) and was asked to reach the capital, along with the forces under his command, as early as possible. Now the situation had completely changed. Sulaiman Shikoh, who had reached Munger at just about this time, decided to make a settlement with Shah Shuja. After a short negotiation, Shah Shuja was offered Orissa, Bengal and the territory of Bihar to the east of Munger, and a treaty was signed to this effect on 7 May 1658.[60] Sulaiman Shikoh immediately marched back towards Agra to help his father against Aurangzeb.

Even in the post-Bahadurpur developments, none of the *zamindars*, including Bahroz, are referred to in any of the contemporary accounts. The local sources and even their family accounts are also silent about their role in these battles. But soon after Dara Shikoh's defeat at Samugarh (29 May 1658), Raja Bahroz decided to change sides. In the meantime, Aurangzeb dispatched his son, Prince Muhammad, along with Mir Jumla, the Mughal governor of Bengal, at the head of a large army to Patna to take action against Shah Shuja.[61] Having been informed of this, Shah Shuja abandoned Patna and shifted to Munger, which he had fortified very well with the help of Raja Bahroz in previous years when he had been confronted by the army of Dara Shikoh. Mir Jumla, soon after reaching Patna, contacted the local chiefs to gain their support in his struggle against Shuja. Apparently,

at this stage, *farmans* were issued by Aurangzeb to Raja Bahroz and after his submission, he was asked to gather support from other *zamindars*. Raja Bahroz decided to join Aurangzeb, because in his view, Shah Shuja was hardly in a position to win the war against Aurangzeb. He also contacted other local chiefs to support Aurangzeb.[62]

Mir Jumla reached the vicinity of Munger in early March but the main road was blocked by the enemy. Besieging the town appeared to be time-consuming in the absence of much-needed local support. Raja Bahroz, who had already joined Mir Jumla, provided not only much-needed information about the topography of the region but also the support of the local people. As a result, Shah Shuja was forced to abandon Munger and take shelter at the fort of Raj Mahal.[63] Raja Bahroz again came to the rescue. With his help, the imperial army marched through the Kharagpur hills and successfully launched an attack on the rear of Shah Shuja's army. Shah Shuja was forced to flee and take shelter in the Birbhum area, which was completely inaccessible to the pursuing army. Bahroz, once again, came to their help. Being fully-acquainted with the topography of the region, he led the imperial army to Birbhum through the Kharagpur hills and also made arrangements for the regular supply of food and fodder. He also brought the *zamindars* of Birbhum to Aurangzeb's side.[64]

In around 1660, taking advantage of the war of succession, especially the campaign against Shah Shuja in which almost all the important Mughal officers loyal to Aurangzeb were involved, some of the chiefs of Bihar, notably the Chero chief of Palamau, rebelled. As the governor of Bihar, Daud Khan, was absent from Patna, the rebels expelled the imperial officers and declared their independence. When Aurangzeb was informed of these developments, he issued an order directing Daud Khan to proceed to Patna immediately and suppress the rebellion.[65]

On 23 March 1661, Daud Khan left Patna with Raja Bahroz at the head of a large army to punish the Chero chief of Palamau.[66] After capturing the forts of Kuthi, Kunda and Deogan which guarded the chieftaincy, the imperial army proceeded to attack Palamau (the capital city). Palamau's two forts were very well-defended as the entire area was covered with dense forest and rugged hills. There was hardly any proper approach road. Consequently, the army could not move forward. Besides, the imperialists had very little information about the region. Raja Bahroz again provided much-needed logistical support to the army and personally supervised the clearing of forests. He and his son, Kunwar Tahawwar, actively participated in planning and fighting the rebels throughout this long campaign. It would not be incorrect to say that without the cooperation of Bahroz, Palamau

would not have been captured so easily.[67] Raja Bahroz's services were again sought when Mir Jumla, was asked to conquer Assam during 1661–3. He invaded Assam and Cooch Behar, and conquered these regions for a few years after great hardship and difficulty. During the Assam campaign, Raja Bahroz played a prominent role in the conquest of these regions. We find reference to him along with Asfandyar Khan and Askar Khan, the nobles of Mir Jumla, who were waiting for Mir Jumla on the border of Ghoraghat and Cooch Behar.[68] Mir Jumla fell ill and with no chance of recovery. Raja Bahroz, along with Akbar Khan, Amarat Panah Delir Khan, were assigned the duty to look after Cooch Behar for some time.[69] After that, we do not find any reference to Raja Bahroz in the context of Assam.

Although, Bahroz played a very important role in the campaign against Shah Shuja and thereafter in bringing the chiefs of Bihar under imperial control, his services were surprisingly not given due recognition by Aurangzeb. At the time of his death in 1674–5,[70] he was holding a minor rank of 700/700.[71] Besides, he was also not given any administrative office either in the central government or in the *suba* administration.

Raja Bahroz left behind four sons Kunwar Tahawwur Asad, Kunwar Hoshang, Kunwar Bahroz and Kunwar Guhrashasp.[72] Raja Kunwar Tahawwur Asad, the eldest son, succeeded to the throne of Kharagpur in 1676.[73] He participated in the Palamau expedition along with his father and was particularly mentioned among the *mansabdars* who were ordered to make the final assault on the fort.[74] His services were again requisitioned during the uprising of the *raja* of Jaintiya in the Sylhet area. The *Akhbarats* mention that Shaista Khan, the *nazim* of Bengal, received reports that the *raja* of Jaintiya with 1,500 infantry had ravaged the *thanas*, pillaged the villages and besieged the fort of Sylhet. He, along with Iradat Khan, the Mughal noble, and Kunwar Tahawwur Asad,[75] the *zamindar* of Kharagpur, defeated the *raja* and brought the area under the imperial control.[76]

Tahawwur Asad's name also occurs in the *Akhbarats* of Aurangzeb's reign in connection with the suppression of rebellion of Ganga Ram in Bihar during 1682–4.[77] Ganga Ram was an *amil* of Khan-i-Jahan Zafar Jung who had sent him to manage his *jagirs* in Allahabad and Bihar when he went as viceroy to the Deccan in 1680.[78] Owing to the jealousy of the old *mutasaddis* (a clerk) who unjustly charged him with embezzlement and poisoned the ears of his master against him, Ganga Ram was recalled by Khan-i-Jahan. However, Ganga Ram disobeyed Khan-i-Jahan and with 4,000 horses plundered the town of Bihar Sharif and besieged Patna.[79] Tahawwur Asad, under the command of Safi Khan, the governor of Bihar, played a very important role in the suppression of Ganga Ram's rebellion.[80]

Aurangzeb died in 1707 and was succeeded by his son Muazzam who is known as Bahadur Shah Zafar I or Shah Alam I. He ruled till 1712. Jahandar Shah then succeeded to the throne and ruled for a year. In 1713, Farrukh Siyar came to the throne and reigned till 1719. In the same year, Muhammad Shah Rangeela ascended the throne and ruled till 1748. After him, Shah Alam II ruled. In any case, the edifice of the Mughal empire collapsed after the death of Aurangzeb. The weak successor emperors could not control the Mughal administration properly, which led to dirty party politics and factions at the Mughal court. A number of these emperors were either murdered or removed from the throne due to faction politics. Some were incapable of administering the empire during the first half of the eighteenth century, which further loosened Mughal control over the central and the provincial administration. This led to the rise of a number of regional powers in the country who asserted their power and position in their respective regions, such as the nawab of Bengal, nawab of Awadh, the Marathas, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Sikh, the Rajputs, the Afghans, etc. Nadir Shah, the ruler of Iran and Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan ruler, invaded and plundered the northern India during the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century which was another setback for the Mughal empire. European companies like the British East India Company and the French East India Company also tried to carve out their own colonies in India. Later on, the English East India Company proved itself superior to all the regional powers and made India colony.

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century, a number of Mughal nobles were appointed as governor or deputy governor of Bihar but we do not have much information about them. Even references to them in context of the Kharagpur chieftaincy are not available in detail. When Surbuland Khan was appointed deputy governor of Bihar for the second time in 1715, he suppressed refractory zamindars like Sudhist Narayan, the Ujjainia chief. However, we get information about the Kharagpur chieftaincy during 1714 when a *khilat* was granted to Raja Tahawwur Asad for his services.[81] Thereafter, we have no other reference to Tahawwur Asad during the reign of Aurangzeb, although he outlived the latter and died in 1726. Mohammad Qubad,[82] one of his eight sons accompanied the Mughal prince Azim-us-Shan to the Mughal court and learnt the art of warfare. Once when Prince Azim-us-Shan was going to Teliyagadhi a wild deer (*arna*) appeared and inflicted injury on many, and could not be killed by anyone. The courtiers were jealous of Mohammad Qubad, and wanted to injure him, so they praised his valour and bravery to the prince and induced him to ask Mohammad Qubad to kill the beast. Qubad killed it with one stroke of his sword.

The prince was highly impressed with his bravery and offered him Teliagarhi as his *jagir*. However, before Qubad could take possession of it, he died of smallpox.[83]

Qubad had two sons, Arjasp Roz Afzun and Muhammad Azam Irdshar. Raja Tahawwur Asad had sent Arjasp to the Mughal court where he was entrusted with the duties of his father. He remained there until he heard of the death of his grandfather. Arjasp returned to Kharagpur after receiving the title of *Roz Afzoon Sani* by the Emperor Muhammad Shah Rangeela. It seems that Arjasp after his accession to the throne, developed good relations with the *naib* nawab of Bihar, Alivardi Khan. When the nawab and his wife arrived at Kharagpur, Raja Arjasp welcomed them grandly and gave them valuable presents when they left. Arjasp ruled for seven years. He had a son named Muzaffar Ali, and a daughter who was married to Kamghar Khan. Arjasp died in 1734.

Muzaffar Ali was a minor when he succeeded to the throne of Kharagpur in 1734. Therefore, his uncle, Mohammad Azam, ruled the chieftaincy as vice-regent on his behalf. When Muzaffar Ali reached the age of seven, his uncle died. Muzaffar Ali looked after the administration of his chieftaincy with the encouragement and support of Nawab Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bengal. Muzaffar Ali also got the favour and support from Sarfaraz Khan, the *subedar* of Bengal, as his father Raja Arjasp had cordial relations with him. Some of the nobles who had developed enmity with Raja Arjasp now tried to create a rift between Muzaffar Ali and Alivardi Khan. They reported a number of untrue matters to the latter. Alivardi Khan came under the influence of these allegations and decided to depose Muzaffar Ali. It seems that for some time the Kharagpur chieftaincy was directly controlled by Alivardi Khan. During 1740, Alivardi Khan had captured the position of the *subedar* of Bengal and appointed Zainuddin Haibat Jang, his nephew and son-in-law, as the deputy governor of Bihar. The *Siyar- ul-Mutakherin* tells us that Hassan Beg was appointed the governor of the fort of Munger during 1741–2.[84] It seems that Raja Muzaffar Ali was still a minor and not able to control his chieftaincy. Therefore, Alivardi Khan appointed Hassan Beg to take care of the *raja* and his administration. There is a reference that Zainuddin Khan or Haibat Jang, the deputy governor of Bengal, suppressed other turbulent *zamindars* like Raja Udwant Singh and Raja Ghorat Singh, both *zamindars* of Shahabad.[85] These *zamindars* were driven from their principalities and their forts and habitations were destroyed. The Shahabad region was freed from their rebellious activities like violence. Then Haibat Jang asked Hidayat Ali Khan, the Mughal commander, to subjugate the other refractory *zamindars* of Bihar. Hidayat Ali Khan with the cooperation of Raja Sunder Singh of Tekari

and Raja Jaikisan Singh of Seres and Cotamba, defeated and subjugated the powerful *raja* of Ramgarh.[86] Haibat Jang was a great administrator and within a short time he completely subjugated all the unruly *zamindars* of the land.

In 1742 Alivardi Khan, faced a Maratha invasion. Raghuji Bhonsle the chief of Nagpur, sent his peshwa, Bhaskar Pandit, to attack Bengal. Alivardi Khan wanted to save Bengal from the onslaught of the Marathas and, therefore, he called Zainuddin Haibat Jung from Bihar for help. Zainuddin was facing some financial problems regarding the army arrears and felt uneasy at having to leave Bihar a recently conquered and unsettled province. However, he gave Hidayat Ali Khan the charge of the Bihar *suba* and left for Murshidabad, accompanied by 5,000 cavalry and 6,000 or 7,000 infantry. In one of the contested battles, the Marathas were defeated on 27 September 1742 and fled.[87] Zainuddin then returned to Bihar became arrogant after his success against the Marathas and Afghans and wanting to eliminate Alivardi Khan from the *masnad* of Bengal. But in one of the treacheries of the Afghans, Zainuddin was killed in 1748.[88] After the murder of the deputy governor of Bihar, the Afghans took control of the Bihar *suba*. They inflicted atrocities on the family of Zainuddin and plundered the province. The city of Patna fell prey to all the atrocities. The Afghan usurpation of Patna for three months brought untold miseries on the people.[89] Immense wealth was plundered after the murder of Zainuddin.

On the other hand, the Marathas continuously attacked Bengal and Bihar, and looted and plundered the entire region. Alivardi Khan put all his efforts in to checking the invasion and plunder by the Marathas in eastern India but he was not always successful against them due to their guerrilla warfare tactics. However, Alivardi Khan again defeated the Marathas who were under the leadership of Raghuji in 1748.[90] He then appointed Siraj-ud Daula, his grandson and the son of Zainuddin, as the *subedar* of the Bihar *suba* and Raja Janaki Ram as his deputy. However, Siraj-ud Daula, was not a great administrator. He was more interested in the post of nawab of Bengal. He created all nuisances and difficulties against his grandfather, Alivardi Khan, and wanted to capture the *subedari* of Bengal. But Raja Janaki Ram, the deputy governor, looked after the affairs of Bihar properly, and maintained law and order in the province for almost five years before dying in 1752.[91] After his death, Raja Ram Narayan succeeded to his position.

In 1755, Raja Muzaffar Ali rebelled against the provincial administration of Bihar.[92] We do not know the details of the suppression of this rebellion and its aftermath. Nawab Alivardi Khan died on 9 April 1756 and was succeeded by Siraj-ud Daula as the new nawab of Bengal.[93] During this period, the British East India Company

was preparing for the battle of Plassey against the latter. In 1757, the battle was fought between the Company and Siraj-ud Daula, the nawab of Bengal, and Lord Clive was the winner. The English East India Company was superior in arms and diplomacy than Siraj-ud Daula. During the same year, Major Eyre Coote came to Munger as the commander of the British troops in pursuit of Jean Law, a French adventurer and partisan of Siraj-ud Daula. Major Coote reached Munger late at night on 20 July 1757 and asked for a number of boats, which were provided by the *diwan* of the area. However he was not allowed to enter the fort of Kharagpur.[94]

After the battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar ascended the throne of Bengal as the nawab. Raja Ram Narayan the deputy governor, *zamindars* and some other officers of the Bihar *suba* were unhappy with the new regime under Mir Jafar. They opposed the British supremacy in Bihar. Raja Ram Narayan was more loyal to the Alivardi Khan's family. But later on when Raja Ram Narayan became loyal to the British, the *zamindars* could not challenge the latter's mighty. Businessmen like Jagat Seth, Mahtab Rai and Swarup Chand had supported the British East India Company against Siraj-ud Daula in the battle of Plassey. They were interested in trade and commerce and in earning money. The British and the Dutch had borrowed money on interest from Jagat Seth and the mercantile class who were earning profits. Both the parties (the Companies and the businessmen) had the same interest and they found an obstacle to this in Siraj-ud Daula, as the nawab wanted the British East India Company and other merchant communities to practice their trading and commercial activities in a proper, uncorrupt manner. Therefore, they united against him. The *zamindars* of Bihar were landed aristocrats with large wealth in the form of agricultural land. The Company also put pressure on them for the payment of land revenue which they were unable to pay as it was a heavy burden on them.

Nearly three years later, in 1760, the army of the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam II, marched through the south of the Munger district, pursued by Major Caillaud, and Miran, the commanders of the British forces in Bengal. The emperor had been defeated by the British under their commands at Sirpur on 22 February 1760. At the end of the same year, another small campaign was fought in the Kharagpur hills. After the battle of Plassey, the British had become the masters of Bengal and Bihar, and tried their level best to plunder the economic resources of these provinces. They also became king-maker, replacing one nawab with another, and looting and plundering their wealth and property. This plunder of wealth by the Company came to be known in history as 'the Plassey plunder'. Therefore, these nawabs generally tried to free themselves from the clutches of the Company.

Mir Qasim, who had become the nawab of Bengal after Mir Jafar, wanted to free himself from the influence of the British East India Company. He shifted his capital from Murshidabad to Munger in 1761, built a palace there and fortified it. He tried to establish law and order in Bihar. The nawab also gave patronage to learned people and welcomed scholars to his court.[95] Now Mir Qasim's attention was drawn to the Kharagpur Raj, where anarchy had prevailed. The Kharagpur Raj was a part of Junglettery, which was a part of the Kharagpur chieftaincy surrounded by the plains of modern Bhagalpur, Colgong and the Ganges on the north, the Kharagpur hills on the north-west, Gidhaur and the plains of Bihar in the west, the provinces of Ramgarh and Panchet in the south and south-west, Birbhum on the south-east, the Rajmahal hills on the east, and by the Ganges and part of the Rajmahal hills on the north-east. The area now roughly comprises portions of the districts of Bhagalpur, the Santhal Pargana, Munger and Hazaribagh in the province of Bihar, and Birbhum in Bengal.

This vast area of Junglettery was considered inaccessible and unknown, and only served as a receptacle for robbers.[96] The Mughal government had not been successful in establishing peace through this region. So anarchy prevailed here even when the English company was associated with its administration. Unruly hill tribes often attacked the people living in the plain. The Mughal government had devised certain measures to protect the life and property of these people. The hill men usually entered into plain through the ghats or mountain passes, so the government had introduced the Ghatwally tenure.[97] According to this, certain persons, often of high rank, received lands from the emperor at a low rent or without rent on condition that they perform the duties of protecting and preserving order in the neighbouring districts. Jagannath Deo, the adopted son of Laxman Deo, was the principal and most powerful of the Ghatwals of Junglettery under the Kharagpur Raj. He had succeeded to his father as the Ghatwal of Junglettery in 1755. Mir Qasim Ali had tried to subjugate Jagannath Deo but he did not succeed.[98]

During 1761–2, Raja Muzaffar Ali fell under the displeasure of Nawab Mir Qasim Ali.[99] The latter ordered the removal of Muzaffar Ali from the *gaddi* of Kharagpur. Shaikh Fakhruddin was to be appointed to look after the affairs of the chieftaincy. A military force of 5,000 skilled soldiers, along with artillery and guns, was sent to depose the Raja. Raja Muzaffar Ali was defeated and fled for his life to Ramgarh.[100] On his way there, he met Abu Ali, the brother of Nawab Mir Qasim Ali, who induced him, through many promises, to go to Munger. On his arrival at Munger, though he was imprisoned and Shaikh Tabibullah was dispatched with two companies of soldiers to

bring his family from Kharagpur. The latter reached Kharagpur, he began to plunder the region. He took all the royal *sanads* and *farmans* into his possession, destroyed them and brought back the family of the *raja* from Kharagpur.[101]

Nawab Mir Qasim Ali sent another expedition against the Ramgarh *raja* in 1762 on the report that he had given shelter to and encouraged rebel local *rajas* like Muzaffar Ali of Kharagpur, Raghunath Narayan of Panchet, Kamghar Khan of Narhat and Samoy, and Badekal Ram of Birbhum, who had also harassed the local people. Abdullah Khan and Markat Khan led the expedition, attacked Ramgarh and conquered it.[102]

After his defeat in the battle of Buxar (1764) by the English East India Company, Mir Qasim fled from Munger to Patna and freed Raja Muzaffar Ali from prison. Now Nawab Mir Jafar Ali was made the nawab of Bengal for the second time. Mohammad Aziz Afghan, an old servant of Raja Muzaffar Ali, secured the *sanads* of the *faujdari* of the Kharagpur principality from Mir Jafar Ali and took over the chieftaincy of Kharagpur. He tried to improve the agricultural production there but failed. Raja Muzaffar Ali, tried his best to settle matters cordially with the *faujdar* and wanted to share the revenue of the locality with him. But the latter did not pay heed to this proposal and continued to grab the entire revenue of the estate. After some time his relation with Mir Jafar Ali became strained and he was imprisoned by the nawab who dispatched Mir Haidar Ali from Murshidabad to look after the Kharagpur chieftaincy.

Meanwhile, Ehtemad-ul Daula the brother of Mir Jafar and deputy governor of Bihar, narrated the ruined condition of the Kharagpur chieftaincy to Richard Barwell, the English agent at Patna and sent a *parwana* (an order of conferment) to Raja Muzaffar Ali at Kharagpur. The *raja* was seriously ill and unable to move. Therefore, he sent his son, Kunwar Fazle Ali (Faiz Ai), to appeal to Barwell. After some time, the *zamindari* of Kharagpur was restored to Raja Muzaffar Ali but an *amil*, Mir Abu Talib, was appointed at Kharagpur to protect the interests of the Company. This officer soon accused the Raja of disrupting in his work and complained to Barwell. He also told Barwell that the prosperity and happiness of the estate would return only when the Raja was replaced by another competent ruler. Raja Muzaffar Ali was again deprived of all authority and his house was plundered. He and his family fled to Jagannath Deo, a rebel hill chief, for safety. Abu Talib, the *amil*, along with some other evil-minded people, pursued him. They could not found the *raja* but captured his relatives and followers.

The *raja* again sent Bholanath, the *mutasaddi*, to Murshidabad and complained to Muzaffar Jung, the new nawab of Bengal, about the

injustice which had been done to him. The nawab issued an order to Shitab Rai, the new deputy governor, of Bihar to see to the matter and solve the problem. Shitab Rai paid no attention till he received a second order to release Fazle Ali from prison. He summoned Abu Talib to explain the matter related to the Kharagpur chieftaincy. The latter knowing the fate which was awaiting him, took poison and died. After his death, Fathullah was appointed as the manager to look after the affairs of the chieftaincy. Shitab Rai took Fazle Ali with him to Murshidabad and after an interview with Nawab Muzaffar Jung, he was freed and with the permission of the nawab, returned with his *mutasaddi* to Kharagpur. He left Chuni Ram, his *diwan*, at Murshidabad. Raja Muzaffar Ali was very angry with Bholanath as he did not take interest in Fazle Ali's return. Dissatisfied with Bholanath's explanations, he dismissed him. Chuni Ram remained for a month at Murshidabad to plead with Muzaffar Ali. At last it was ensured that an influential man should stand for the surety or good conduct of Raja Muzaffar Ali. Chuni Ram presented Mir Haider Ali for this purpose, which was accepted by Shitab Rai. In the meantime, news reached Shitab Rai from Fathullah, the manager of the chieftaincy that Jeo Narain Ghatwal of Kheosar and Bholanath, the former *mutasaddi* of Raja Muzaffar Ali, had murdered Praudut, the *qanungo*. When Shitab Rai read this petition of complaint, he gave it to Chuni Ram who told him that the ghatwals had always been behind Raja Muzaffar Ali to disgrace and dishonour the latter due to enmity. Bholanath had been deposed from his post a long time ago and this murder had not been committed under the instigation of the *raja*. Shitab Rai ordered that the case be investigated when he was in Munger. However, when he went there, he did not investigate it and left instead for Azimabad (Patna). Once there he sent Clerk, the British officer with two companies of soldiers to punish the *raja*. When they arrived in Kharagpur, Raja Muzaffar Ali retired to the forest and deputed his son to meet Clerk. But a few ghatwals like Bandho Deo, Muhkim Singh and Mohan Singh complained to the British officer that Raja Muzaffar Ali had instigated his son, Fazle Ali to create disturbance and revolt. Therefore, Clerk ordered his soldiers to advance against Fazle Ali. When the latter came to know about the march of the army he fled to the forest. Raja Muzaffar Ali was eventually captured and sent to Patna in 1770.[103]

Shitab Rai ordered that Raja Muzaffar Ali be imprisoned. The latter, not finding any other option to free himself, filed a petition of 'Not Guilty' in the court of Shitab Rai in 1770. Bandhu Ghatwal, Mahkum Singh and other Rajputs as well as Mir Haider Ali, the *amil* were summoned to Patna. After the investigation, the *raja* was ordered to be released from prison but was ordered to remain at Patna. A man

was appointed to observe his good conduct, and Raja Muzaffar Ali was given Rs. 2 per day to maintain himself.[104] A few years later (1774), Captain Browne appeared to administer the chieftaincy of Kharagpur. The *raja* pled his innocence with him but nothing came of it. He now sent his son, Fazle Ali, to explain Browne and he personally narrated all the details of the deposition and imprisonment of his father since the past decade. Captain Browne gave him a patient hearing, and asked him to work heart and soul for the Company and said that he would restore his father to the *zamindari* of Kharagpur chieftaincy. Fazle Ali worked for the Company very sincerely. In 1781, Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, visited Patna and Captain Browne informed him about the case of Raja Muzaffar Ali, discussing with him about the matter in details. Warren Hastings ordered to relieve the *raja* from Patna and restored him the *zamindari* of Kharagpur. The *raja* returned to Kharagpur. However, he could not survive for long to rule over his restored *zamindari* and died in 1782. He had six sons, Kunwar Mohsin Ali by first wife, Raja Fazle Ali from second wife, Kunwars Lutf Ali, Hassan Ali, Nasir Ali[105] and Kunwar Babar Ali[106] from third wife.

Kunwar Fazle Ali succeeded to the *gaddi* of Kharagpur and ruled for a short period from 1773–6. During this period, some of the territories like 5 *tappas* of Bhagalpur, Kolgong and the Jungleterry division of Kharagpur were annexed by the British. Only the Kharag-pur chieftaincy was left to Raja Fazle Ali.

After the death of Fazle Ali, his son, Qadir Ali (1777–1820), succeeded to the throne in 1777. At the time of his accession, he was a minor boy of five years but in the course of time, he grew to become a fine and mature administrator. We find interesting information from the Bhagalpur Collectorate reports: On 16 July 1780 the collector of Bhagalpur reports to Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal that since the dispossession of Raja Muzaffar Ali the present *zamindari* of Kharagpur was under *chaudharies* and *talukdars* and some places under *amils* and *muqaddams.* The Governor-General recommended that Raja Qadir Ali be given the *zamindari* of Kharagpur and Chunni Lal, an old servant, be appointed guardian. Pargana Kajra was appropriated by Captain Browne to recover the debts of the *raja.*[107] Francis Buchanan, who had visited Raja Qadir Ali at Kharagpur on 1 March 1811, described him as an exceedingly social man who lacked intellect. He further said that the *raja* looked after the affairs of the *zamindari* more than the other *zamindars* but had fallen into debt and that the chieftaincy would probably be ruined.

Munsi Mahadev Lal notes that Qadir Ali wanted to take possession of the Tarapur Diara (a village name), which was not restored to him and remained under the control of Tribeni Singh, Dalip Singh and

Dharaj Narayan, the *qanungos*. They were the defendants in a suit of claim filed by Qadir Ali at the court of the Collector of Bhagalpur. Later on, the claim was decided in favour of the *raja* but he could not take it into his possession because he died in 1820.[108] It is said that the *raja* constructed one *imambara* (a congregation all for Shia Muslim), in a garden on the other side of the Man River, which has since been ruined.[109]

Raja Iqbal Ali, the son of Qadir Ali, succeeded to the throne in 1820. During his time, the Company led a campaign against Burma in 1824. The *raja* gave full support to the Company in its struggle against the Burmese army. Lord Amherst acknowledged this and gave him the title of *Maharaja Bahadur* with royal robes. The *maharaja* ruled for seven years and died in 1827.[110]

Raja Rahmat Ali, the brother of deceased *raja*, sat on the throne in 1827 and ruled till 1852. During the early period of his reign, he showed wisdom and efficiency indulged in ease and luxury-living later on. He constructed a grand palace and beautiful garden where all sorts of parties were held. He also developed a garden, which was named Rahmat Bagh.[111] It is said that Raja Rahmat Ali developed trouble with Jhabban Singh, the ghatwal of Handwe, and on 13 February 1832, sent a petition to the collector about Jhabban Singh's non-payment of rent to him. Ward the Special Commissioner, noted in his report of November 1833 that the ghatwal of Handwe tenure was being enjoyed by Jhabban Singh free of rent. In 1839, Raja Rahmat Ali fell into arrears of revenue in consequence and he alleged embezzlement by his agents at Munger who had enough money in their possession to pay the government demand. The *raja*, thus, became a victim of the unbending sunset law and his property, except Haveli Kharagpur, Kajra and Belpata, was sold on 29 January 1840.[112] Raja Vidyanand Singh of Purnea, the descendant of Raj Banaili, and one Balanath Sahu purchased the estate; later on, Balanath Sahu's share was taken by Raja Banaili. In 1845, Haveli Kharagpur, too, was auctioned for Rs. 41,000 and it was purchased by Maharaja Rudra Singh Bahadur of Darbhanga Raj. Kajra and Belpata were decreed to Bibi Wazirunnessa, the wife of Raja Iqbal Ali, for payment of her dowry, which amounted to a heavy sum. Thus, the entire Raj passed out of the *raja's* hands. When he had no means of livelihood and was reduced to misery, he went to the *maharaja* of Darbhanga. The Maharaja treated him kindly and granted him 500 *bighas* of land at a nominal rent of 8 *annas*, and an annual sum of Rs. 1,000 to maintain himself. Raja Rahmat Ali Khan died in 1852 and was buried at his special request at the entrance of his *imambara*.[113] He had no son and after his death, his second wife enjoyed the benefits of the land and annual allowance granted by the *maharaja* of Darbhanga. However,

after the death of Maharaja Maheshar Singh Bahadur, the Darbhanga Raj came under the control of the Court of Wards, which reduced the allowance by Rs. 400. Hence, the *rani* of Kharagpur received only Rs. 600. During the famine of 1867, Shah Husain Ali, a Deputy Collector, went to Kharagpur to settle lands. He was moved to see the miserable condition of the *raja's* family and induced the government to grant a pension to them. The nine *ranis* began to receive a monthly pension of Rs. 15 each and from October 1880, one of them got Rs. 125 a month from Maharaja Lachmishwar Singh Bahadur in exchange for land taken over from her.[114]

NOTES ON KHARAGPUR'S ARCHITECTURE

In the seventeenth century, Munger appears to have been a well-fortified town with fine buildings. Nicolas Graaf,[115] a Dutch physician who visited it in the beginning of the century, was struck with admiration at the sight of its white walls, towers and minarets. In 1745, however, when Mustafa Khan, a rebellious general of Alivardi Khan, marched to Kharagpur, he found its fort ruined.[116]

Buchanan, who visited Kharagpur during 1810–11 when Raja Qadir Ali was the *zamindar* of Kharagpur, gives the following description:

> Even the houses of the Raja of Kharagpur although it contains some small portions of brick are but a sorry place. Near it, however there is a very handsome mosque overhanging the *Man* River in a fine situation, while he is erecting opposite a building that promises to be ornamental, and it is intended to celebrate the memory of the grandson of the Prophet. The vicinity is ornamented by the ruins of a house that belonged to his grandfather, and went to ruin during the insurrection which he raised against the last remnants of the Mughal force.[117] It has been a very large building and looks more like an old European castle than anything that I have seen.

If one proceeds to Kharagpur by road from Bariarpur, the first thing that can be noticed is the *imambara* of Raja Rahmat Ali at the right-hand side of the road facing the river Man and another ruined structure on the other side of the river at the entrance of which the *raja* is said to have been buried at his special request. It is the only ruin on this side of the river. Moving forward, there is the bridge over the river Man. From here, one gets the picturesque view of the three-domed mosque. To the right-hand side of the point where the bridge touches the other side of the river, there stands a ruined structure some say that it was the storehouse of the *raja*. The ruin might be the building about which Buchanan has referred to in his accounts. A big ruined palace and a mosque were traced there, constructed by Bahroz.

On the road that leads to Tarapur, 3 miles away from Kharag-pur, there are two temples and two tanks facing one another. They are

called Raja Rani Talao (tank) and are reminiscent of the days when the *rajas* of Kharagpur were still Rajputs. This place was their hunting ground. The temple and the tank to the south of the road are attributed to one of the *rajas* and those on the north to one Rani Chandravati.[118]

Though Kharagpur contains few remains to attest the erstwhile greatness of its *rajas*, it is one of the most historic of the well-known historical places in the Bhagalpur division in Bihar. This beautiful small place lies close to the eastern flank of a range of hills known as Kharagpur range.[119]

CONCLUSION

It seems that during first thirty years of the eighteenth century, the Kharagpur chieftains remained loyal to the Mughal empire or did not openly rebel against the Mughal authority as we do not find any untoward activity against them. It appears that they remained quiet during the above-mentioned period because there was no pressure of revenue payment or the clearing of arrears from the Mughals as the latter were not in a position to administer the local region properly and were facing disturbances during this period. Raja Tahawur Asad was the chief of Kharagpur from 1675 to 1726 and it appears that he either remained loyal to the Mughals or remained quiet because his position was not interfered with by any authority. However, it seems that he paid valuable service to the Mughals. He was succeeded by his son, Raja Arjasp, who developed very good relations with Nawab Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar. When Alivardi Khan and his family visited Kharagpur, Raja Arjasp welcomed them grandly and offered lavish hospitality to them. Raja Arjasp died in 1734 and was succeeded by his minor son, Muzaffar Ali. He got encouragement and support from Alivardi Khan and favour of Sarfaraz Khan, the *subedar* of Bengal.

Nawab Alivardi Khan succeeded to the governorship of Bengal in 1740. During 1741–2, some nobles tried to create a rift between him and Raja Muzaffar Ali. There is a reference that Hasan Beg, a noble, was appointed by the nawab to look after the chieftaincy of Kharagpur. In 1755, Raja Muzaffar Ali rebelled against the provincial authority but we do not have information about what happened after his rebellion. Was it suppressed or not and, if it was, what kind of settlement was done about the chieftaincy?

In 1757, after the battle of Plassey, Eyre Coote came to Munger in pursuit of Jean Law, a French adventurer and partisan of Siraj-ud-Daula, and tried to enter the Kharagpur fort but was not allowed to.

During 1761–2, Raja Muzaffar Ali incurred the displeasure of the Nawab Mir Qasim Ali. Action was taken against him and he was imprisoned. His property was plundered and Shaikh Fakhruddin was appointed to look after the affairs of the chieftaincy. After the battle of Buxar (1764), Mir Jafar became the nawab of Bengal for the second time. Muzaffar Ali was still in prison. Mohammad Aziz Afghan secured the *sanads* of the *faujdari* of the Kharagpur principality from Mir Jafar and ruined the Kharagpur chieftaincy. Although Muzaffar Ali made an effort to take possession of his *zamindari*, his voice was not listened to by the British East India Company, which after acquiring the *diwani* rights of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, was fully determined to extract the economic resources of these states as much as it could. From 1765–75, the Kharagpur chieftaincy was handed over to some officials (nobles) who were working for the interest of the Company and they exploited the economic resources of the chieftaincy. This is the period when Muzaffar Ali was removed from the *zamindari* of Kharagpur. Some portion of it was placed under *chaudharis* and *talukdars* and some under *amils* and *muqaddams*.

During Kunwar Fazle Ali's rule, some territories like 5 *tappas* of Bhojpur, Kolgong and the Junglettery division of Kharagpur were annexed by the British East India Company. During the reign of Raja Qadir Ali, Captain Browne appropriated pargana Kajra from him to recover the debts of the Raja. Raja Iqbal Ali gave full support to the company in its struggle against the Burmese army in 1824. Lord Amherst gave him the title of *Maharaja Bahadur* and royal robes. Gradually, the *zamindari* of Kharagpur was sold out to different people and the royal family began to live on a small pension. At the end of nineteenth century, this financial support also came to an end.

NOTES

1. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Munghyr*, Calcutta, The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1904, vol. XVII, p. 214.
2. The *farman* is cited in Ahmad Raza Khan, 'Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582–1707', unpublished thesis, Aligarh, Aligarh Muslim University, 1985, pp. 179–88.
3. William Wilson Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, London, Trübner & Co., 1875, vol. 15, p. 177. Also Ahmad R. Khan, 'Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582–1707', pp. 179–88.
4. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, p. 107.
5.

Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1982. p. 40.

6. Raza Khan, 'Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582–1707', p. 179.

7. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Munghyr*, vol. XVII, p. 214. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. 15, p. 177.

8. His brothers, Basdeo Rai and Mahendra Rai, settled at Bita Mandar in Bhagalpur and Mauza Sawaee in pargana of Shahruwy, respectively (Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, p. 178).

9. Munsi Mahadev Lal, *Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj*, Munger, Miratul Hind Press, 1884, p. 10 (Urdu text). Kalipada Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj' *BPP*. vol. LXXII (72), no. 135, 1953, p. 50. However, Hunter and Montgomery Martin is of the views that Rup Shah was the only son of Dandu Roy (Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, p. 177 and M. Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, Delhi, Cosmo Publications, 1976, vol. II, p. 237.

10. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 50. The contention of Qeyamuddin Ahmad that Sangram Singh succeeded to the throne after the death of Dandu Rai is not supported by any epigraphic evidence (Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *A Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar* (*AH 640–1200*), Patna, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1973, pp. 254–5.

11. In the fifth year of his rule, he went on a hunting expedition one day and happened to pass through Basanpur, now known as Rajghat. Finding the place pleasant, he took out his sword (*khadg* or *kharag*), placed it on the ground and named it Kharagpur and made it his capital (Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 50). But, according to Rash Bihari Bose, Sangram Shah the grandfather of Beroj, having conquered fifty-two Khetauri *rajas* who held sway in different parts of the country, came to the bank of the river Man, in order to select a site for his capital. Suddenly a hare (*kharghosh*) came running from the neighbouring jungles. It was pursued by a dog but the hare turned upon its pursuer and killed the hound. The spot where this incident took place was chosen by the warrior chief as the site for his capital and in commemoration of the wonderful occurrence, was called Kharagpur (now written Kharakpur, from *khargosh*). Some scholars are of the view that the name Kharagpur is derived from Kharga Singh who is said to have completed the subjection of the country conquered by his brother, Sangram Singh (Babu Rash Bihari Bose 'A Visit to Kharagpur', Calcutta, *JASB*, 1871, p. 24).

12. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, pp. 107–8, (Persian text).

13. Ibid., p. 320.

14. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, tr. H. Beveridge, Calcutta, The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1941, vol. I, p. 729.

15. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 418.

16.

For details of their family feud, see the chapter on Gidhaur.

17. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, pp. 460–1. See the chapter on Gidhaur. Also see S.H. Askari, *Medieval Bihar Sultanate d- Mughal Period*, Patna, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1990, p. 120.

18. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 576.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 611. Also see Askari, *Medieval Bihar Sultanate d- Mughal Period*, p. 121.

21. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-ijahangiri*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur & Aligarh, Private Press, 1863–4, vol. I, p. 39.

22. Ibid. Also see Matamid Khan, *Iqbal Nama-i Jahangiri*, ed. Abdul Haiyi and Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1875, p. 21. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul Umara*, ed. Abdur Rahim and Ashraf Ali, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, vol. II, pt. I, 1888–91, p. 218.

23. Jahangir Quli was the title of Baz Bahadur but Hunter confuses Baz Bahadur with another commander.

24. However, it is said that the *rani* (wife of Toral Mal) became a *sati* on hearing that her husband had been taken prisoner at Delhi and put to death. Rashbihari Bose, 'A Visit to Kharagpur', *JASB*, vol. XL, 1871, p. 25.

25. Hunter, *A Statistical Account* vol. 15, 178–81.

26. Lal, *Tawarikh-i -Kharakpur Raj*, pp. 10–14.

27. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-ijahangiri*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur & Aligarh, Private Press, 1863–4, vol. I, pp. 39, 145.

28. Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, Delhi, Cosmo Publications, 1976, vol. II, pp. 237–8. Although Kalipada Mitra describes the event in the same way, he says that after the feat of killing a lion, the king asked him to renounce his ancestral religion and embrace the faith of Islam. Accordingly, Toral Mal embraced Islam of his own free will. At that very moment, the king presented a cup of water from his own decanter with his own hand and Toral Mal, without any hesitation, drank the water and also made his three sons drink it (Mitra, 'History of Kharagpur Raj', p. 51).

29. These terms are defined in Glossary.

30. Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, p. 238.

31. Lal, *Tawarikh-i-Kharagpur Raj*, pp. 10–14. However, Martin mentions that special grants were given to Bega Sultana, the Muslim wife of Raja Roz Afzun. He writes that the *parganas* of Haveli and Kharagpur were given to Bega Sultana for her residence as well as household expenses, Laheta for her *churi* (bangle) expenses, Singhol for her *sindur* (vermilion) and so forth. These

parganas are still in existence in their original names in the Munger district. The major part of these grants had been made at the time of Toral Mal's marriage to Bega Sultana (Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, pp. 237–333).

32. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, pp. 178–81.

33. Ibid.

34. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-ijahangiri*, p. 69.

35. Ibid., p.145. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, p. 218.

36. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-ijahangiri*, p. 145.

37. We know that the Mughals rarely established matrimonial relation between their daughters and the nobles. They considered none of them equal to their status.

38. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, pp. 178–81.

39. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-ijahangiri*, p. 346.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p. 354.

42. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, p. 218.

43. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, ed. Kabir al Din Ahmad, Abdur Rahim and W.N. Lees, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica: 1866–72, vol. I. pt. I, p. 213.

44. Ibid., 214–18.

45. Ibid., p. 240. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Masir-ul-Umara*, pp. 218–19.

46. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, pp. 240–6.

47. Ibid., p. 295.

48. Ibid., p. 316. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, pp. 218–19.

49. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. I, p. 537.

50. Ibid., p. 34.

51. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 39. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahan Nama*, tr. A.R. Fuller, ed. and compiled, W.E. Bengley and Z.A. Desai, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 131.

52. Munsi Mahadev Lal, M. Martin, K.P. Mitra and R. Bose mention the death of the *raja* in 1631, which does not seem to be true. The Persian chronicles clearly mentions that Raja Roz Afzun accompanied Prince Shuja in the

expedition to the Deccan to capture the Parenda fort during 1633–4 (Lahori, *Badshahnama*, p. 537). In the eighth reigned year of Shah Jahan, the *raja's mansab* increased to 2,000 *zat* and 100 *sawar* and during the same year, 1085 AH (1634–5), he died (Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, pp. 218–19; Lahori, *Badshahnama*, p. 67). Hunter and Malley also mention his death as having been in 1635.

53.

Lahori, *Badshahnama*, p. 303. Mohd. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, ed. G. Yazdani, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1917–46, vol. II, p. 459.

54.

Lal, *Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj*, pp. 12–14. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur', p. 52.

55.

Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Munghyr, p. 215. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur', pp. 52–5. However, M. Martin writes that Chakla, a place in Midnapur of Birbhum district, was restored to the *raja*, which has been since lost. He further adds that Raja Bahroz was then appointed *Sahur Nishan* or royal standard bearer and returned Kharagpur to enjoy his estates (Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, pp. 239–40). K.K. Basu locates Chakla of Midnapur near Delhi as a *jagir*, and says that Bahroz built a tower there and named it Kharagpur after his native place (K.K. Basu, 'The Early History of the Zamindars of Bhagalpur', *BPP*, vol. XLIII (43), pt. II, no. 86, April–June 1932, p. 115).

56.

Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. II, p. 742. But Qeyamuddin Ahmad says that Raja Bahroz was holding the rank of 700/700 in the 3rd Julus of Shah Jahan when he was deputed to the Qandhar campaign (Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *A Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscription of Bihar (ad 640–1200)*, Patna, KPJRI, 1973, p. 257).

57.

Munshi Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, Lucknow, Newal Kishore Press, 1898, vol. II, p. 57 (an Urdu text). Also B.P. Ambashthya, 'Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj in the Shahabad District in Bihar', *PIHC*, 22nd, Session, Guwahati, 1959, pp. 271–2.

58.

Its classification number in the Manuscript section of the Patna University Library is 31. Also see, B.P. Ambashthya, 'Some Farmans, Sanads, Nishans and Inscriptions in Bihar', *JBRS*, vol. XLIII, September–December 1957, pts. III and IV, pp. 226–7.

59.

Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, ed. Khadim Husain and Abdal Hai, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1865–73, vol. I, p. 247.

60.

Ibid.

61.

Ibid.

62.

Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 57.

63.

Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, pp. 494–5. Aqil Khan, *Waqiat-i Alamgiri*, ed. Zafar Hasan, Delhi, Capital Publishing House, 1945, p. 125.

64.

Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, pp. 496–7.

65.

Ibid., pp. 648–9.

66. Ibid., p. 650.

67. Ibid., pp. 648–60. See details of this campaign in the chapter on the Cheros of Palamau.

68. Shehabuddin Talesh, *Tarikh-e-Aasham or Fat-he Ibreya*, tr. Mazhar Asif, Guwahati, Department of Historical & Antiquarian Studies (DHAS): 2009, p. 141.

69. Ibid., p. 143.

70. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', pp. 52–3. Lal, *Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj*, p. 14. However, according to *Maasir-ul Umara* and R. Bose in his 'A Visit to Kharagpur', *JASB*, 1871, p. 24, the date of Bahroz's death is 1076 AH (1665–6). This is obviously wrong in view of another inscription of Raja Bahroz discovered by Qeyamuddin Ahmad (no. 130), which is dated 1085 AH (1674–5). Moreover, the *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah* also testifies that Bahroz was alive till the 9th Julus of Aurangzeb. An entry, dated 19 Rajab, 9th Julus (5 January 1667) mentions the death of the son of Raja Bahroz *zamindar* of Kharagpur. Thus, it appears that Bahroz died sometime around 1085 AH (1674–5), the date of the inscription of his son and successor Raja Kunwar Tahawwur Asad (no. 141). The *Mukhtasar-i-Tawarikh-i-Kharagpur* gives the date of his death as 1084 Fasli (1675) which seems to be nearer the truth (Ahmad, *A Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar* (*ad 640–1200*), pp. 257–8).

71. Mohd. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, ed. G. Yazdani, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica 1917–46, vol. III, p. 475.

72. Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, pp. 239–40. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur', pp. 52–3.

73. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur', p. 53.

74. Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, pp. 657–8.

75. Raja Kunwar Tahawwur has been mentioned in *Akhbarat* as Tahawwur Asad.

76. Ahmad, *A Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar (ad 640–1200)*, pp. 299–300.

77. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, 'A View of the Provincial Administration of Bihar under Farrukhsiyar 1712–19', *JBRS*, Patna, vol. L, pts. I-IV, June–December 1964, p. 122.

78. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Calcutta, M.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1912, vol. V, p. 309, Askari, *Medieval Bihar Sultanate & Mughal Period*, p. 174.

79. Ahmad, 'A View of the Provincial Administration of Bihar under Farrukhsiyar, 1712–19', p. 122n.

80.

Bhimsen, *Nuskha-i-Dilkusha*, tr. Jadunath Sarkar, edited with notes and introduction by V.G. Khobrekar, Bombay, Department of Archives, Maharashtra, 1972, p. 135.

81. Ahmad, 'A View of the Provincial Administration of Bihar under Far-rukhsiyar, 1712–19', p. 122.

82. The other seven sons of Raja Tahawwur Asad were Baharmand, Roshan Bukht, Buland Bukht, Qudratullah, Asmatullah, Hasnullah and Dhakaullah. The last six died childless (Ahmad, *A Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar (ad 640–1200)*, pp. 300–1). But according to Kalipada Mitra, Raja Tahawwur Asad had only six sons ('History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 53).

83. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 53.

84. Ghulam Hussain Khan Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul Mutakherin*, tr. Haji Mustafa, Calcutta, printed by T.D. Chatterjee, 1902, vol. I, p. 374.

85. K.K. Datta, *Alivardi and His Times*, Calcutta, Calcutta University Press, 1939, pp. 55–6.

86. Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul Mutakherin*, p. 375.

87. Ibid., p. 399.

88. Ibid., vol. II, 141.

89. Datta, *Alivardi and His Times*, 134–5.

90. Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnama*, has been translated in *Bengal Past and Present* (*BPP*), 1946–7, f. 46. The Persian Manuscript of *Muzaffarnama* is available in Khuda Baksh Library, Patna (Ms. no. 1186). Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us Salatin*, tr., Maulvi Abdus Salam, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1902, p. 359.

91. Yusuf Ali Khan, *Tarikh-i-Mahabatjang*, the original manuscript no. 683, is available in Patna University Library, Patna, f. 78. Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul Mutakherin*, vol. II, p. 117, *Dastur-ul Insha*, collections of letters, most of them were written by Raja Ram Narayan, the *diwan* of the Bihar *suba* when Raja Janaki Ram was the deputy governor of Bihar. It is compiled by Munsi Vijayram of Lucknow in 1769 and available at Patna University Library, Patna.

92. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 54.

93. Siraj-ud Daula was the son of Zainuddin Haibat Jang who was the son of the brother of Alivardi Khan and married to one of his

94. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Munghyr, p. 40.

95. Ibid., p. 42.

96. *Indian Historical Records Commission, Proceedings of the Meetings*, New Delhi, Government of India Press, January 1942, vol. XVIII, p. 219.

97.

Ibid., p. 220.

98. Govind Misra, *History of Bihar 1740–72*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970, p. 62.

99. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', pp. 54–5. L.S.S. O' Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, Monghyr, Patna, Superintendent Government Printing Bihar and Orissa, 1926, p. 223.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid., pp. 56–7. Ibid., pp. 224–5.

104. Ibid.

105. Their descendants were living at Navagarh when Kalipada Mitra visited the places in 1953 (Mitra, 'History of Kharagpur Raj', p. 58).

106. Their descendants were residing in Bhagalpur during 1953 (Mitra, 'History of Kharagpur Raj', p. 58).

107. The restoration of the *zamindari* of Kharagpur to Raja Qadir Ali was confirmed by Warren Hastings in a *sanad* granted on 21 April 1781 (Ibid., p. 59). Munsi Mahadev Lal supports this.

108. He had six sons Kunwars Iqbal Ali and Rahmat Ali (by his first wife), Irshad Ali and two daughters (by his second wife), and Rahat Ali, Akbar Ali and Yar Ali (by his third wife) (Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 60).

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid., pp. 60–1.

111. Interestingly, a weekly market was held inside the garden where all the men and women from the towns and villages were compelled to come to buy and sell things. If someone missed attending in a certain week, he was severely punished by the *raja*. The people were disgusted with this state of affairs. One day it so happened that while the *raja* was drunk, the District Magistrate visited Kharagpur and desired to meet him. The *raja* not only refused this but also asked him to go away. This insulting behaviour made the District Magistrate angry and he put the whole estate of Kharagpur on sale for arrears of revenue amounting to Rs. 8,000. The estate was sold for Rs. 3,40,000 in 1840 (ibid., p. 61).

112. Amarendra Nath Sinha, 'Notes on Kharakpur', *JBORS*, vol. XVIII, pt. 1, March 1942, pp. 48–9.

113. When the author (Amarendra N. Sinha) visited Kharagpur on 13 October 1941, he could not trace any sign of the burial. He was told by Abdur Rahman Khan,

the *moazzin* of Raja Bahroz Mosque, that the grave was a *kuchcha* one. See ibid. Mitra, 'History of Kharakpur Raj', p. 61.

114. Ibid., p. 62.

115. Graaf was once imprisoned at Munger and his account of the fort has been mentioned in C.E.A.W. Oldham, 'An old Description of the Munghyr Fort', *BPP*, vol. XXVII, pt. II.

116. Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, Monghyr, Patna, 1926, p. 39.

117. There is, however, a ruined palace built by Raja Bahroz, adjoining which is a three-domed mosque picturesquely situated on the River Man. A marble slab on one of the walls shows that it was built in 1656 during the reign of Shah Jahan (ibid., p. 225).

118. Ibid.

119. Sinha, 'Notes on Kharakpur', p. 51.

CHAPTER 3

The Ujjainias of Bhojpur

Bhojpur was a mahal in the *sarkar* of Rohtas of the Bihar *suba* during Akbar's reign.[1] Later on, when the *sarkar* was divided into two (Rohtas and Shahabad), the Ujjainias held their major portion in the *sarkar* of Shahabad. During the reign of Jahangir, the Ujjainias controlled part of the *parganas* of Arrah, Bihiya, Danwar, Pero, Punwar, Nanar, Dambara, Barahgaon and Bhojpur in the *sarkar* of Shahabad, part of the *parganas* of Sahasram and Chainpur in Rohtas and of Kopa and Manjhi in the *sarkar* of Saran. Besides these, the Ujjainias also held Garh and Mahmoodabad.[2] Their strongholds were the forts of Shergarh and Jagdishpur.[3] Presently, Bhojpur is a village situated 2 miles north of Dumraon in the Buxar sub-division. Bhojpur has been divided into two Bhojpurs namely Bhojpur Qadim (old) and Bhojpur Jadid (new).[4] However, the whole northern part of the erstwhile district of Shahabad is commonly known as Bhojpur and its inhabitants are called Bhojpuris.[5]

Shahabad, one of the *sarkar* in the *suba* of Bihar, comprised the south-western portion of the Patna division and was situated between 24°31′ and 25°43′ north latitude and between 83°23′ and 84°55′ east longitude.[6] The name Shahabad is probably associated with the memory of the Mughal emperor, Babur who had pitched his camp at Ara in 1529 after his victory over the Afghans of the province of Bihar. In order to commemorate his victory, Babur named this place Shahabad or the city of the emperor.[7]

The Shahabad (Bhojpur) region was under the domination of the Chero, a branch of the Rajbhant tribe who earlier ruled over the Magadh region which was known as Kikat.[8] However, their domination over the Kikat region, in general and Bhojpur, in particular was challenged by the Parmar Rajputs who migrated from Ujjain to Bihar in the early fourteenth century.[9]

Different versions exist about the establishment of the Ujjainias hegemony over Bhojpur, however, it is now generally believed that the chiefs of Bhojpur belonged to Ujjain, and migrated to this region

and established their rule in 1320.[10] The early history of their chieftaincy is, however, extremely confusing even the family history and local tradition are at variance about the rulers. It is only after the accession of Raja Durlabh Deo that we find a clear picture of the Ujjainia Raj. Raja Durlabh Deo who ascended the throne in 1489, had three wives and five sons namely, Badal Singh, Shivram Singh, Sangram Singh, Devendra Singh and Mahipal Singh.[11] Trouble in the family started in 1500 when Raja Durlabh Deo under the influence of his second wife, declared Shivram Singh as his heir apparent and treated Badal Singh, the oldest son with indifference and neglect. The other members of Durlabh Deo's family, including the two other queens, strongly opposed this partial decision. Badal Singh apparently remained faithful to his father. However, he left Bhojpur, went into the forest and raised his own troops to strengthen his position.[12] Bodhraj, the author of *Bhojpur mein Paramaron ka Itihas 1577 tak* (Hindi ms. available in Khuda Bakhsh Library), has given a very detailed account of Badal Singh's life during his wanderings in the forest and of his meeting with Farid (later, Sher Shah). It is interesting to note that their problems were of a similar nature. Both had to leave their homes because of the machinations of their step-mothers. Hence, they became very good friends vowed to remain faithful to each other and promised to extend all possible help in times of need.[13]

When Farid took charge of Sahasram and Khawaspur Tanda in 1511, he sent an envoy with gifts to Durlabh Deo and made enquiries about his friend, Badal. He requested Durlabh Deo to send Badal to Sahasaram. Durlabh Deo received the envoy with due honours and informed him that as he had become quite old, he needed the services of Badal for running the administration of his kingdom. Although Farid's own fortunes declined soon after because of the renewed rift between him and his father, Badal was able to retrieve his position due to Farid's intervention.[14]

Badal Singh was able to maintain his position at the court of his father till 1518. He had collected a large number of troops who were personally loyal to him. However, after the death of his father in 1519, a war of succession started among his brothers in which he and Mahipal Singh were killed. Shivram Singh, who survived, became the head of the Bhojpur chieftaincy with its capital at Bihta in 1519.[15]

After the death of Badal Singh, his widow along with her two minor sons, Gajpati and Bairi Sal, passed her life in great distress. However, after her sons became eighteen and fifteen years old respectively, the *rani* met Sher Shah in 1532 and requested him to help her sons get back their chieftaincy. Bodhraj tells us that with the army sent by Sher Shah, Gajpati, the elder son of Badal Singh, defeated and killed Shivram Singh and succeeded to the throne at Jagdishpur in 1534.[16]

After this, very close and cordial relations were established between Gajpati and Sher Shah. Gajpati was so obliged to the latter that in the same year, 1534, on Sher Shah's plea to help him against Sultan Mahmud Shah of Bengal, he immediately proceeded towards Surajgarh at the head of two thousand horses. In the hotly-contested battle fought at Surajgarh, Sher Shah defeated Ibrahim Khan, the commander of Sultan Mahmud.[17] Bodhraj adds that Ibrahim Khan was killed by Gajpati and all the camp equipment, elephants and artillery pieces of the Bengal army fell into the hands of the Afghans and Ujjainias. Sher Shah was so pleased with Gajpati's valour that the region of Buxar was assigned to him as a reward.[18] Sher Shah also gave a sword to Bairi Sal, the brother of Gajpati.[19]

In the meantime, an unfortunate development took place, which created further dissension in the Ujjainia family. The widow of Mahipal (the son of the youngest wife of Durlabh Deo and uncle of Gajpati who was murdered in a family feud due to the succession struggle), along with her son Dalpat, approached her brother, Birbhan of Arail[20] and requested him to help her son in getting back the chieftaincy of the Ujjaianias. Birbhan, who knew fully well that Gajpati had cordial relations with Sher Shah, decided to seek the help of Emperor Humayun.[21] In 1538, when Humayun marched towards Barkhnada (in the Palamau district of Bihar) in pursuit of Sher Shah, Birbhan met him on the way and requested him to help his nephew to get back his old position in the Ujjainia chieftaincy. It seems that he also apprised him of Gajpati's close relations with Sher Shah. Humayun agreed to help him and also provided him with some retainers. It is believed that with this army, Birbhan succeeded in defeating Gajpati and establishing his nephew, Dalpat, in Jagdishpur. With the passage of time, Dalpat also established his control over Buxar and Bhojpur.[22]

Birbhan felt deeply obliged to Humayun and gave him sincere support in his clash with Sher Shah. When Humayun was defeated in the battle of Chausa (1539) and was hotly pursued by Mir Farid Gaur, an Afghan commander of Sher Shah, Birbhan personally came to meet the emperor and provided him with all necessary provisions. He helped him in crossing the Ganges near Mirzapur and requested him to proceed to Agra, assuring him that he would deal with Mir Farid firmly and decisively. Hence, Humayun was able to reach Agra safely.[23]

Raja Gajpati, on the other hand, being dispossessed of his estate, joined Sher Shah with a strong contingent of Ujjainia soldiers. Though Bodhraj and Munsi Vinayak Prasad are silent about his role in the battle of Chausa, after critically analysing all the facts connected with the battle, one comes to the definite conclusion that Gajpati took a

leading part in it and contributed substantially to the success of Sher Shah.[24] We find that soon after the victory in the battle of Chausa, Gajpati, apparently with the support of Sher Shah, launched an attack on Dalpat, defeated him and captured Bhojpur. Sher Shah also conferred on him the title of *raja*, and the *sarkars* of Rohtas and Shahabad were assigned to him. Gajpati constructed a fortress at Jagdishpur and made it the capital of his chieftaincy.[25]

Sher Shah defeated Humayun, the Mughal emperor in 1540 and established Sur dynasty, which ruled in north India till 1555. During the rule of the Sur dynasty, there was complete peace in the Bhojpur region. Gajpati not only consolidated his position as the most powerful chief of north-west Bihar but also extended the boundaries of his chieftaincy up to the borders of the Jaunpur *sarkar*.[26] With the reestablishment of the Mughal rule in north India under Humayun (July 1555), there was a possibility of Gajpati being displaced by Dalpat with whom Humayun had some personal relations. But before Dalpat could contact Humayun, the latter suddenly died in an accident. Therefore, the situation remained unchanged for Gajpati.

After the succession of Akbar to the Mughal throne at Delhi in 1556, Bairam Khan, the tutor of Akbar, appointed Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman to expel the Afghan rebels from the eastern region. Ali Quli achieved some success against the rebels and established his headquarters at Jaunpur. While operations against the Afghans were in progress, Raja Gajpati, who had cordial relations with them, also started opposing the Mughal army. According to Badauni, 'Gajpati whose army and strength was such that for the space of two years, he had kept Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman uselessly employed in jungle cutting and even that jungle was not clear as it ought to be.'[27]

From the above, it appears that Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman failed in his efforts to subdue Raja Gajpati. In the meantime, Bairam Khan was dismissed and the nobles who were opposed to him got the upper hand at the Mughal court. Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman and his relations were considered very close to Bairam Khan and they were singled out for harassment. Finding all doors of negotiation closed, Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman, along with his relations and clansmen, rebelled. For almost four years (1564–7), the entire resources of the Mughal empire were pooled together to suppress this rebellion. In 1568, Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman was killed in the battle of Jhusi and the rebellion came to an end but it strengthened the power of the Afghans and local chiefs of the eastern region. The military might of the Mughal empire, which could have been used against the Afghans, was wasted in suppressing its own nobles. The Afghans utilised this opportunity to further improve their position.

After the suppression of the Uzbek revolt of 1568, Munim Khan was

appointed as the governor of Jaunpur. Soon after reaching there, he started making efforts to bring the local chiefs and other recalcitrant elements of the area under imperial control. Bayazid Bayat writes that during 1568–9, Raja Gajpati submitted before Munim Khan and agreed to pay a sum of Rs. 5 lakh per annum as *malguzari* (land revenue).[28] The entry of Raja Gajpati into the imperial service not only extended the Mughal frontiers eastward but also placed the Mughals in a strategically advantageous position in respect to the Afghans of Bihar.[29]

In February-March 1573, the Afghans rebelled under Lodi Khan and captured Zamania. Lodi Khan also launched an attack on Jaunpur, which was the headquarters of the Mughal commander, Munim Khan. Munim Khan was taken by surprise by this sudden attack. He hastily mobilised the available troops at Jaunpur and sent a detachment under the command of a number of important nobles, such as Mirza Hasan Khan, Jan Muhammad Bihsudi, Tenger Quli, and Raja Gajpati, to oppose Yusuf Mohd., an Afghan rebel. The garrison of Ghazipur was ordered to cooperate with them. The imperial forces met the Afghans on the left bank of the Ganges and forced them to cross back to the side of Zamania after a brief battle. When the news of the Afghan invasion spread, the Mughal officers began to pour into Jaunpur with their contingents. The armies of Tardi Muhammad Mirza, Hasan Khan, Jan Muhammad Bihsudi, Tenger Quli and Raja Gajpati were placed under the command of Nazar Bahadur and ordered to cross the Ganges at Benares to harass the enemy by making lightning attacks from the rear.[30] Nazar Bahadur was defeated at the fort of Sirsi near Ghazipur. Munim Khan now collected all the Mughal forces and rushed towards Ghazipur to retrieve the situation. Yet when he reached there, Lodi Khan opened negotiations for peace to which he responded favourably. However, his demands were such that no agreement could be reached. Only two alternatives remained before Munim Khan: to give battle or retreat from Ghazipur and suspend further operations till Akbar's return from Gujarat. He was more inclined towards the second alternative but to avoid taking the entire responsibility on himself for such a step, he convened a council of war and placed the issue before the officers. The proposal of a retreat was vigorously opposed by Raja Gajpati and Bayazid Beg. In the course of the discussion, when Munim Khan pointedly asked Raja Gajpati to express his opinion on the issue, the latter exclaimed impatiently, 'After all, will you offer a battle to the Afghans or not?' Munim Khan took serious exception to this retort and accused Bayazid Beg of insisting Raja Gajpati for the battle against the Afghans. Bayazid Beg and Raja Gajpati remained firm in their views and argued that postponing the battle would not only create disorder in the army

but would encourage the Afghans to harass the imperialists. Ultimately, it was decided that the Qaqshals (a Turkish tribal group) would launch a night attack upon the enemy's camp and if they succeeded in creating confusion among the Afghans, a general assault would be delivered.[31] This plan could not materialize owing to the dubious attitude of the Qaqshals. However, Munim Khan came out of the fort of Ghazipur and engaged the Afghans in an open battle. At the same time, the bridge of boats built by the Afghans over the Ganga was destroyed by a dust storm. As a result, Lodi Khan's line of supplies across the Ganga was disrupted and an acute scarcity prevailed inside the Afghan camp. As the situation in the Mughal camp was no better, both the parties negotiated a settlement and the Afghans left for Patna.[32]

Munim Khan's efforts, however, did not make much impact on the strongly-entrenched Afghans. As soon as Akbar was free from Gujarat affairs, he advanced towards the eastern region at the head of a large army and flotilla of boats in 1574. After a halt at Chausa and Maner, Akbar reached Patna. Having surveyed the fort of Patna, he came to the conclusion that it could be captured only after the occupation of Hajipur. Therefore, Raja Gajpati along with M. Ali Alam Shahi, Sayyid Shams Bokhari and his sons, and under the command of Khan Alam, were dispatched to launch an attack on Hajipur. The emperor personally supervised the entire operation. The imperialists defeated the garrison and Hajipur was captured. Soon afterwards, Patna was also captured but Daud Khan, an Afghan rebel, taking advantage of night, secretly slipped away to Bengal.[33]

Akbar returned to Agra after appointing Munim Khan as the governor of Bihar. Raja Todar Mal was appointed the *diwan* of the *suba*. Besides this, Muzaffar Khan was appointed to capture the fort of Rohtas, which was then held by the Karrani Afghans. Soon after, the Mughals defeated the Afghans in different areas and captured places like Surajgarh, Munger, Bhagalpur and Kahalgaon, which were then the strongholds of the Afghans. In the same year (1574), Munim Khan dispatched Rampat Ujjainia,[34] the son of Raja Gajpati, under the command of Raja Todar Mal, to suppress the rebellion of the Afghan chief, Daud Khan, in Bengal. The rebels were defeated after a number of skirmishes during October 1574.[35] The services of Rampat Ujjania were also utilised by Munim Khan in Orissa against Daud Khan in 1575.[36] While Munim Khan was busy in his campaign against Daud Khan, he was suddenly taken ill and died after a brief illness in the same year.[37]

Akbar now dispatched Husain Quli Khan-i-Jahan to Bengal as its governor on 15 November 1575 and deputed Raja Todar Mal to assist him in this campaign. Some of the Mughal officers of Bengal had

meanwhile left the province where they had been suffering its bad climate and proceeded towards Bihar through the Purnia and Tirhut route. This exodus was stopped at Bhagalpur through the efforts of Khan-i-Jahan, who took up his residence at Rajmahal as the rains had set in.

In the meantime, Muzaffar Khan, who had been directed by the emperor to reinforce Khan-i-Jahan with forces from Bihar, joined him at Rajmahal. After holding consultations, they decided to attack the enemy immediately. In a hotly-contested battle fought at Rajmahal (12 July 1576), the Afghans were completely defeated. The Afghan rebels like Junaid Karrani, an old ally of Raja Gajpati was killed in fight, Kala Pahar, was severely wounded and Daud Khan, was arrested and beheaded.[38] Afghan rule, thus, came to an end once and for all.

During the absence of Muzaffar Khan from Bihar and probably one or two months before the battle of Rajmahal, Raja Gajpati unfurled the banner of rebellion against the imperial authority in 1576.[39] Saeed Khan Chagta, who was officiating as the governor of Bihar during the absence of Muzaffar Khan, was ordered to immediately proceed with Makhus Khan and other officers of Bihar to the assistance of Shahbaz Khan Kamboh who was specially deputed to put down the revolt of Raja Gajpati.[40]

Although Raja Gajpati had joined Mughal service and cooperated with Munim Khan in dealing with the Afghan rebels as mentioned earlier, it seems that the Ujjainias could not be fully integrated into the Mughal political structure. He was neither given a rank nor any administrative responsibility by the imperial administration. It is also important to note that Raja Gajpati was shown no special favour by the emperor who had come to Bihar to suppress the Afghan rebellion in 1573–4 and possibly met him during the campaign.

Raja Gajpati arrested Peshrau Khan who was sent by the imperialists to negotiate with him and besieged Ara where Farhat Khan, the *jagirdar* of Ara, had taken shelter.[41] Farhang Khan, the son of Farhat Khan whose *jagir* lay to the east of the river Sone, advanced towards Ara along with Qarataq Khan with a view to relieve his besieged father. But both of them were killed in a hand-to-hand fight with Gajpati. This made Farhang's father come out of the fort but he also shared the same fate.[42] Gajpati took hold of the town of Ara and its fort. Emboldened by the victory, he crossed the Ganga and rushed towards Ghazipur to capture the family members of Khan-i-Jahan.[43] Meanwhile, Shahbaz Khan Kamboh, who was also marching towards Ghazipur, overtook him near the town and a battle was fought in which Gajpati was defeated and put to flight. Pursuing him, the imperialists reached the fort of Moheda,[44] which was held by a local chief named Sangram. Under the pressure of the imperial army, the

raja surrendered the fort to Shahbaz Khan.[45] Gajpati, however, escaped and took shelter in the dense forests of Bhojpur. The area was almost inaccessible for the Mughal cavalry. Despite his best efforts Shahbaz Khan failed to reach Gajpati's headquarters. At this juncture, Sangram, the local *zamindar* who had recently joined imperial service, came to his help. At his direction, the Mughals attacked Dawa,[46] the home of Gajpati, and put it to pillage and plunder. Gajpati immediately rushed toward Dawa and made a night attack on the Mughal army to save the town. However, he was defeated and forced to flee. He took shelter in Jagdishpur, which was situated around a thick forest. Shahbaz Khan dispatched a strong army and Jagdishpur was put to siege. The siege operation continued for about three months and, ultimately, Gajpati was defeated. Although the fort and several of his family members, a huge amount of money and the entire chieftaincy came into the hands of the imperial authority, Gajpati, along with his brother, Bairi Sal, and son, Sri Ram (Rampat Ujjainia), managed to escape.[47] Bairi Sal and Sri Ram took shelter in the neighbouring hilly forest and defied the imperial authority for some time. But the Mughals made a surprise attack on them, and defeated and killed Bairi Sal.[48] Almost at the same time, Gajpati was killed by the Mughals and the career of a powerful territorial chief came to an end in an uneventful manner.

From the above discussion, one may conclude that the Mughal imperial administration had no clear-cut policy towards the *zamindars* of Bihar. We have seen that even after Gajpati subordinated himself to the Mughals and agreed to pay *malguzari* of Rs. 5 lakh, he was neither admitted to the imperial service (explanation: although he helped the Mughals in and around Bihar but he was not given any *mansab* and any permanent official post by the Mughals) nor given any official position in the Bihar administration. Apparently the Mughal officers posted in Bihar were given complete freedom to deal with them depending on the local conditions.

Gajpati and his son, Sri Ram, continued to cooperate with the Mughal administration until Munim Khan took charge of the affairs of Bihar. During Muzaffar Khan's tenure, too, he remained loyal to the Mughals. However, after the arrival of Khan-i-Jahan, Gajpati's attitude changed completely. He declared his independence and attacked the imperial officials posted at Ara. The sources are completely silent on the causes of his revolt but from a closer examination of the *Akbarnama,* it appears that Raja Gajpati was extremely unhappy with the attitude of Khan-i-Jahan and directed all his energies in capturing his family and belongings in the course of the rebellion of Khan-i-Jahan. Besides, Gajpati might also have noticed that the Mughal resistance had grown weak under Khan-i-Jahan and it would be

possible for him to recover his territories from imperial control.

Gajpati's son, Sri Ram, escaped and took shelter in the strong fortress of Shergarh. Hotly pursuing the rebels, Shahbaz Khan reached Rohtas and captured it after a siege of a few days. The fort was held by Sayyid Mohammad on behalf of the deceased Junaid Karrani. His position had become very weak after Junaid's killing because a number of his supporters joined the Mughals. However, with the capture of the fort of Rohtas, the position of Sri Ram, in Shergarh became vulnerable. He immediately approached Shahbaz Khan, offered his submission and handed over the keys to the fort.[49] Thereafter, we have no information on Sri Ram in our records.

After the rebellion and killing of Gajpati and his son, Bairi Sal, Dalpat, son of Mahipat, uncle of Gajpati, laid claim to the chief-taincy of the Ujjainias. Although Sri Ram, the eldest son of Gajpati, was the rightful heir to the Ujjainia chieftaincy, his claims were disregarded on account of the rebellion of his father and his own conduct. Dalpat was recognized as the ruler of Bhojpur by Emperor Akbar. He remained loyal to the Mughals for about only four years and in 1580, raised the banner of revolt against imperial authority. The reasons for his rebellion have not been discussed in any of the contemporary Persian records or family accounts. It seems that Dalpat nursed a grievance against the Mughal imperial authority for neglecting his claims to the Bhojpur throne and giving undue favour to Gajpati, who had been a favourite of Sher Shah and had fought against Humayun in the battle of Chausa. After the restoration of Mughal rule, he expected that Gajpati would be removed and the chieftaincy restored to him for the help that his maternal uncle had provided to Humayun during his flight after his defeat at Chausa. Yet that had not happened and Gajpati was recognized as the chief of Bhojpur.

Therefore, Dalpat availed of the opportunity and succeeded to the throne of Bhojpur but he was not happy with the Mughal administration. In 1580, when the rebellion in Bihar and Bengal broke out, he also joined the rebels and established close contact with the rebel leader, Arab Bahadur. To strengthen his position, he shifted his capital from Bihta-Danwar to a safer place called Bahuara in Piru in the Ara subdivision and built a strong fort at Dalpat-garh.[50] As mentioned above, around 1580 Afghans rebelled under the command of Arab Bahadur, attacked Patna and put to siege the fort of the town.[51] As the situation became extremely serious, the emperor appointed Mirza Aziz Koka as the governor of the *suba* to suppress the rebels and retrieve the situation.[52] Mirza Aziz Koka proceeded towards Patna but after crossing Chausa, he was informed of the rebellion of Dalpat Ujjainia.[53] The officers who were posted in the area further informed him that Dalpat had become quite powerful and it would be

extremely dangerous to move forward without suppressing him. Aziz Koka accepted their advice and started making determined efforts to quell the rebellion. Arab Bahadur now realized that he would not succeed in capturing the fort early. He raised the siege and fled to Bhojpur. On reaching there, Dalpat not only gave him shelter but also assured him of his complete cooperation in his struggle against the Mughals.[54]

In the meantime, Shahbaz Khan Kamboh who was specially deputed by the emperor to assist Mirza Aziz Koka, also reached Bihar. Now both the commanders launched an attack on Jagdishpur. The town was plundered but Dalpat and Arab Bahadur escaped to the jungles, and continued their struggle. As the area was full of defiles and dense forests, the Mughal army could not force them into an open battle. On the other hand, the rebels adopted guerrilla tactics, and harassed and killed the Mughal soldiers in large numbers.[55] Shortly after, though serious differences arose between Aziz Koka and Shahbaz Khan. Ultimately, Aziz Koka withdrew from the campaign and went to join Raja Todar Mal.[56] However, Shahbaz Khan stayed on ordered the clearing of the jungles and stationed troops on important routes. The fort of Kant[57] was assigned to Saadat Ali Khan and Payenda Khan. Rustam (a Mughal officer) and Rup Narayan (a local chief), were also called upon to assist him. Before Saadat Ali Khan was able to strengthen his position, Arab Bahadur and Dalpat made a surprise attack on Kant and killed him after a bitter fight.[58] As soon as Shahbaz Khan came to know of this attack, he swiftly moved in that direction and drove Dalpat and Arab Bahadur towards Sahasram. After Arab Bahadur's defeat and flight, Dalpat was forced to submit to imperial authority.[59] However, from Sahasram, Arab Bahadur moved to Saran, and began to plunder and harass the people of the area. Shaham Khan and other nobles were sent to punish him. Before a serious military operation could start, though, Arab Bahadur fled to Jaunpur and joined a rebel, Masum Khan Farankhudi.[60]

Dalpat Ujjainia, after remaining under the subordination of the imperial authority for about eight years, rebelled again in 1599. Abul Fazl writes that he had become rebellious on account of the strength of his place and of his abundant equipment. He informs us that Prince Daniyal, who had been appointed as the governor of Allahabad, was ordered to check Raja Dalpat Ujjainia who had become defiant in his attitude. He further adds that when Daniyal reached Hajipur, Raja Dalpat Ujjainia came and submitted before the prince and presented elephants to him.[61] Soon after, out of 'smallness of wisdom he fled from the court and rebelled'. However, within a short time he was captured and brought back.[62] Dalpat was pardoned and allowed to go home. From a reference in the *Akbarnama*, it appears that a daughter

of Dalpat was married to Prince Daniyal and in 1604, a son was born to them. Akbar named him Farhang Hushang.[63] When Dalpat was on his way to Patna, Barkhurdar, the son of Abdur Rahman (a Mughal noble) and some of his friends who had left Agra to hunt, came to know that the Ujjainia chief was having his food on the riverbank. Barkhurdar decided to attack and kill Dalpat because his father had been killed by the latter in a battle fought some time ago. However, Dalpat escaped by swimming across the river.[64] When this matter was reported to the emperor, he became very angry with Barkhurdar, got him arrested and decided to hand him over to Dalpat Ujjainia. However, at the request of some senior nobles, he was pardoned and released.[65] Dalpat, though, was not destined to live for long and was treacherously murdered by his own kinsmen in 1601.[66]

He was succeeded by his son, Mukutmani,[67] who was incompetent and highly unpopular with his kinsmen. Within six years of his rule, Mukutmani was forced by his own kinsmen to abdicate in favour of his nephew, Narayan Mal (son of Hol Singh), in 1607.[68] Munshi Vinayak Prasad writes that after his accession, Raja Narayan Mal went to Agra and remained there for some time in the service of Prince Khurram (son of Jahangir and future Shah Jahan).[69] Although Narayan Mal had succeeded to the throne of Jagdishpur with the support of his kinsmen, his claim was weak because Sangram Singh, the son of Bairi Sal (the brother of Gajpati) was a much stronger claimant. He, therefore, decided to visit Agra to plead with the imperial authority to recognize him as the rightful ruler of the Ujjainia Raj. The *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* informs us that in Agra, Narayan Mal succeeded in entering the service of Khurram and gradually gained his favour. However, before he could find favour with the emperor, the Cheros taking advantage of his absence from Bhojpur, unfurled the banner of revolt against the Ujjainias. Therefore, Narayan Mal immediately returned to Jagdishpur to suppress them.[70]

The Cheros nursed a serious grievance against the Ujjainia since they had deprived them of their suzerainty over the land of Kikat, which included Bhojpur and forced them to go towards Palamau. They were also unhappy with the Mughals because the latter had given support to the Ujjainias in driving them not only out of Bhojpur but also out of the fort of Rohtas, which had become their stronghold ever since they were expelled from Bhojpur. Hence, it can be said that the uprising of 1607 was partly directed against the Ujjainias and partly against the Mughal government in Bihar.[71] The prevailing political situation of the *sarkar* of Shahabad was quite favourable for the rebels. Narayan Mal, the chief of Bhojpur, was at Agra on a political mission and those who remained in Bhojpur were fighting among themselves for establishing their hold over the chieftaincy.[72] Besides, Afzal Khan,

the son of Abul Fazl, who had recently joined as the governor of the *suba* was not able to establish a firm grip over the administration of the province.

The Cheros were led by Siya Ram Rai, a prominent Chero chief. He was actively assisted by a band of Chero leaders such as Sonpari Chero, *raja* of Kaddhar,[73] Raja Madhava Munda of Anandichak, Raja Charran Chaap of Balaunja, son of *raja* of Lohardaga and son-in-law of Kaddhar.[74] The Mughal administration took the Chero uprising quite seriously. Narayan Mal, as mentioned earlier, immediately proceeded towards Bhojpur and soon after reaching there, launched an offensive against the rebels. Having come to know of the rebellion of the Cheros, Emperor Jahangir also ordered Rai Kalyan Singh[75] to immediately proceed towards Bhojpur to help Narayan Mal to suppress the rebellion.

In the meantime, the Cheros established themselves in Buxar and started harassing the Ujjainias from there. Narayan Mal attacked Buxar with his contingent to expel them. A fierce battle was fought and the Cheros were completely defeated and were on the point of fleeing when Raja Madhava Munda came to their rescue with a large contingent of Munda soldiers.[76] The Cheros now reassembled themselves and relaunched an attack on the Ujjainias with the support of this contingent. The Ujjainias lost heart but when they were just about to leave the battleground, Rai Kalyan Singh, who was watching from a distance, joined them with 500 Mughal horsemen and a fierce battle started anew. A rumour suddenly spread of the arrival of another contingent of Mughal soldiers. This completely demoralized the Cheros and they fled from the battlefield. The Ujjainias achieved complete victory over the Cheros. Harath Pal, the *raja* of Lohardaga and Raja Madhava Munda were killed along with a number of Cheros.[77] After the end of the rebellion, Narayan Mal was conferred the title of ‘Raja’, and a *mansab* of 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* was also granted to him.[78]

Raja Narayan Mal also suppressed the rebellion of Dhar Shahi (Dhar Singh),[79] a local *zamindar*, with the help of Mukund Rai, an official of Bhojpur chieftaincy. He also helped Afzal Khan, the governor of the *suba*, in suppressing the rebellion of Qutb of Uch (Multan) who pretended to be Prince Khusrau and claimed that he had escaped from prison.[80] Raja Madhukar,[81] who had joined Qutb, was killed in the battle in 1611.[82]

We hardly get any reference to Narayan Mal’s activities over the next eleven years. Possibly he remained at Bhojpur without any important duty being assigned to him. In 1622, Prince Khurram rebelled but after suffering successive defeats, and being hotly chased by Prince Pervez, son of Jahangir, and Mahabat Khan and important

noble of Jahangir, he came over to Orissa and occupied Cuttack. Shortly after, he entered Bengal, captured Burdwan and Rajmahal, and killed Ibrahim Khan, the governor. Thereafter, he marched towards Bihar and captured Patna and Hajipur easily. From Hajipur, he proceeded to Bihiya where he was joined by Raja Narayan Mal and his followers. Raja Narayan Mal was given the rank of 5,000 and his brother, Rudra Pratap, was raised to the rank of 3,000. His other brothers were also given *mansab* of 2,000/1,000. Sometime in 1624, Raja Narayan Mal died.[83] He had ruled for about seventeen years (1607–24) and had extended the boundaries of his kingdom over the *parganas* of Ara, Bihiya, Danwar, Pero Punwar, Nanar, Dambara, Barahgaon and Bhojpur in the *sarkar* of Shahabad, parts of the *parganas* of Sahasram and Chainpur in Rohtas, and Kopa and Manjhi in the *sarkar* of Saran. Besides these areas, he also held Gadh and Mahmoodabad.[84] One remarkable feature of his rule was that he never rebelled against the Mughals unlike his predecessors and, therefore, his capital was never invaded or plundered by the Mughal soldiers. He extended all possible help to the Mughal governor of Bihar in suppressing the revolt of the local *zamindars*. Further, he freed Bhojpur from the Cheros by inflicting a crushing defeat on them and his services were greatly appreciated by the Mughals.

Pratap Singh, the younger brother of Narayan Mal,[85] succeeded to the throne of Bhojpur instead of the latter's minor son, Amar Singh. It is quite significant to note that there was hardly any difference of opinion in the Ujjainia ruling family or among important Ujjainia nobles on this issue. Raja Pratap, with the support of the family, consolidated his position and effectively governed the chieftaincy. The *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* informs us that Emperor Jahangir conferred on him the title of 'Raja' and a *mansab* of 1,000/800. He further writes that Raja Pratap shifted his capital from Jagdishpur to Bhojpur where he built an imposing palace called Navratna.[86]

In recognition of his past services, Shah Jahan, after ascending the Mughal throne assigned Raj Pratap the rank of 1,500/1,000 and recognized him as the *raja* of Bhojpur.[87] He also granted him *jagir* in the *sarkar* of Shahabad. From the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia,* it appears that he remained posted at Agra for some time.[88] Shah Nawaz Khan, the author of *Maasir-ul-Umara,* writes that Raja Pratap returned to his chieftaincy after about a decade. Soon after his arrival, his relation with the *suba* administration became strained. He was accused of inefficiency and exploitation of his peasantry by the officials of the *suba* administration. Some of his relations, particularly officials of his deceased brother, Raja Narayan Mal, and the *qanungo* family of Bakhra Kayasthas, who had good relations with the *suba* administration, exploited the situation by creating further hostilities.

Several *parwanas* issued by the governor of the *suba* were also ignored by him. In the meantime, it was discovered that he had not paid revenue for the last nine years. Therefore, an imperial order was issued ordering him to immediately pay up the entire amount due. He was further asked to present himself before the emperor to explain his conduct for other lapses. The *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* writes that in response to the *farman,* Raja Pratap decided to go to the imperial capital and even went up to Ayodhya but after reaching there, he changed his mind and rose in revolt.[89]

As soon as Shah Jahan came to know of the rebellion of Raja Pratap, he issued an order to Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung and Baqar Khan Najm Sani, governors of Bihar and Allahabad, respectively, to march simultaneously against the rebel. Fidai Khan, the *jagirdar* of Gorakhpur and Mukhtar Khan, the *faujdar* of Munger, were also ordered to march on Bhojpur.[90] However, Raja Pratap was no match for the combined armies of the governors of Allahabad and Bihar although they offered stiff resistance. Muzaffar Khan and Fariddun Beg, the two sons of Zabardast Khan (a Mughal noble) succeeded in making a breach in the wall of the garden surrounding the fort.

After conquering the fort of Tribaq, Kalur and ten other smaller forts, the imperialists laid siege to the main fort of Bhojpur. The siege operation continued for six months but the Ujjainia *raja* continued to resist, and killed Fariddun Beg and Muzaffar Khan. However, the situation inside the fort became critical because of shortage of provisions. In desperation, the *raja* made an attempt to escape but could not succeed. As no resistance was possible any more, therefore, he sent his men to Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung and sued for peace.[91] According to one account, he disguised himself in a loin cloth and holding the hand of his wife, he directly approached Abdullah Khan to negotiate a settlement.[92] On the way, he was arrested and brought before the latter. Abdullah Khan immediately dispatched reports to the emperor detailing the suppression of the rebellion, the conquest of Bhojpur, and the arrest of Raja Pratap and his wife, along with a treasure of thirty-six elephants and fifty horses and other valuables captured during the campaign. The emperor, after going through the report, ordered the execution of Raja Pratap.[93] The *raja* was taken to Patna and probably executed at the western gate of the city.

After the execution of the *raja*, the chieftaincy was brought under the Khalsa and Nemat Khan, son of Sayyid Khan, was deputed to look after the affairs of Bhojpur. Sometime after this appointment, Amar Singh, the eldest son of Raja Narayan Mal, approached Abdul Khan Firoz Jung, the governor of Bihar to recommend his candidature for the chieftaincy of Bhojpur as Raja Pratap had died without any male heir. However, the governor of Bihar was very annoyed with the

Ujjainias on account of their recalcitrant and rebellious nature and he refused to recommend the restoration of the Bhojpur throne even to the rightful heir. He did not listen to the entreaties of Amar Singh and the estate of Bhojpur continued to remain under the governor's control. His unsympathetic attitude did not dishearten Amar Singh; he continued his efforts and ultimately succeeded in getting back possession of the Bhojpur estate with the help of Shah Shuja, the then governor of Bengal in 1648 after a lapse of nearly twelve years through a *nishan*. Later on, Emperor Shah Jahan conferred on him the title of 'Raja' and a *mansab* of 1,000/800 was also assigned to him.[94] Amar Singh shifted his capital from old Bhojpur to Mithila[95] because it was associated with happy memories of his childhood.[96]

In September 1657, Shah Jahan suddenly fell ill. This started a war of succession among his four sons for the imperial throne. On hearing the news of the illness of Shah Jahan, Murad crowned himself at Ahmadabad and Shah Shuja proclaimed himself as emperor in Bengal. Dara Shikoh, the eldest son, had been conferred the title of *Shah-i-Buland Iqbal* (the king of lofty fortune) by his father, and enjoyed a *mansab* of 60,000. He carried on the government of the empire in the name of his father. Aurangzeb, the craftiest and ablest of all, simply completed his preparations to try his luck in the ensuing war. With his excellent artillery and accompanied by Mir Jumla, his loyal noble, he set out from Burhanpur towards Agra in March 1658.

Bhojpur figured prominently in the war of succession between the four sons of Shah Jahan. Eastern provinces formed one of the zones of the fratricidal war. This region was dominated by Shah Shuja. The prince also started for Agra with a large army to try his luck. Dara Shikoh sent his eldest's son Sulaiman Shikoh, with 20,000 Mughal forces, accompanied by Raja Jai Singh of Amber, to face his uncle, Shah Shuja. The Ujjainia Rajputs of Bhojpur were brave fighters and their support was considered valuable for gaining victory in this eastern zone. Hence, both Dara Shikoh and Shah Shuja tried to win over the support of Amar Singh, the chief of Bhojpur.

In one of his *nishans,* Shah Shuja directed Amar Singh to join his camp. The *nishan* runs as follows:

> The best of the peers and contemporaries, worthy of receiving favors and privileges, Amar Singh, being duly honored with royal gifts may know that in the present time the fact of having up right faith and true intentions of the one (Amar Singh) accustomed to bravery, deserving of favors, privileges, gifts and kindness, has been brought to the notice of the enlightened and the holiest (Shah Shuja) by Raja Bahroz who is noted for his bravery and valor. Therefore this order of high magnitude and conspicuous greatness received the honor of being issued and dispatched to the effect that immediately on receipt of this high auspicious and prosperous *Nishan* you (Amar Singh), being contended in every way, should come to the service of the wholly fortunate with as many men as you can afford to collect so that after viewing

the threshold you shall be rewarded with royal bounties and special favors. Take this as urgent.[97]

A similar *nishan* was sent by Dara Shikoh to Amar Singh in which the latter was asked to render all assistance to Prince Sulaiman Shikoh in his fight against his uncle, Shah Shuja. It is dated 26 January 1658 and the *nishan* runs as follows:

The prop and pillar among his likes and contemporaries worthy of favors, Amar Singh *Ujjainia*, being duly rewarded with royal favours may know that whereas Prince Sulaiman Shikoh, the progeny of the rulers and victors, the sum and substance of the family greatness, the mandate of the Sultanat…. Therefore this order of high magnitude received the honor being issued to the effect that the pillar among the equals (Amar Singh) shall immediately on receipt of this high *Nishan* proceed successfully along with his brothers and followers to the service of the fortunate and noble prince (Sulaiman Shikoh) and shall render excessively loyal and faithful services and shall rest assured that the services rendered by the best among the equals (Amar Singh) shall be amply rewarded by imperial favors and grace. His rank shall of course be raised. Take this as urgent and know that the favors of the emperor shall be with you.[98]

Raja Amar Singh's attitude was a foregone conclusion. While the Bhojpur estate was under the possession of the governor of the *suba* of Bihar, Amar Singh had got the help of Shah Shuja in securing the possession of the Bhojpur estate. Naturally he was under a deep debt of obligation to the prince. It was natural that when his request for help came the Bhojpur chief rallied to his support in preference to that of Dara Shikoh.

When Prince Sulaiman Shikoh found that Amar Singh had joined the side of his uncle, he turned to Koklat Ujjainia,[99] a rival of Amar Singh and a claimant to the chieftancy of Bhojpur, who immediately agreed to support him. Sulaiman's action was approved by his father, Dara Shikoh and the prince issued a *nishan* to Koklat, which was handed over to him through Mirza Raja Jai Singh. It runs as follows:

Mirza Raja Jai Singh may know that his Majesty, the holder of the caliphate and the Soloman of the time, had according to my request, raised the *mansab* of Koklat *Ujjainia* to 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* and bestowed upon him the *jagirs* in *pargana* Piru and Danwar and in this respect the *nishan* in favour of Koklat has been sent to pillar of the state (Mirza Raja Jai Singh) so that he may issue a *farman* by his own hands to further assure him.[100]

The forces of Shah Shuja and those of Sulaiman Shikoh had taken up their positions near Bahadurpur (near Varanasi). Shah Shuja's forces were stationed in the middle of a dense forest. It was difficult for the soldiers of Sulaiman Shikoh to enter it and attack his forces. Hence, Sulaiman's army stood helpless. When Dara Shikoh came to know of this, he dispatched instructions to Raja Jai Singh at once

through a letter written on behalf of Emperor Shah Jahan. It is dated February 1658. The letter was written on the very day when the battle of Bahadurpur took place. The *nishan* contained the following instructions:

> How long will it continue like this? What plan you have made to destroy the enemy? If you have not decided upon anything, make it clear to me so that from this place I may suggest some plan and send instructions as to what should be done? At present you should request Gokul Chand *Ujjainia* (Koklat *Ujjainia*), the *zamindar* of that place to send the footmen and soldiers in all directions and close the roads of grain supplies to the enemy, and a similar force should be sent over to Banaras side, for carrying on an irregular fight and closing the enemy's roads for the supply of foodstuffs. It is very likely that the enemy, sick of trenches, may come out and decide to fight or fly.[101]

On 14 Feberuary 1658, the armies of Shah Shuja and Sulaiman Shikoh clashed with each other. Shah Shuja was helped by Amar Singh Ujjainia and Sulaiman Shikoh was backed by Koklat Ujjainia (Gokul Chand Ujjainia). The battle took place at Bahadurpur. Sulaiman Shikoh inflicted a crushing defeat on Shah Shuja. The latter fled towards Bengal and was hotly pursued by his victorious nephew. In a *nishan* issued by Dara Shikoh, Sulaiman Shikoh was ordered to pursue the enemy (Shah Shuja) and to besiege the fort of Munger if he had taken shelter there. He was further told that if the rebel (Shah Shuja) fled to Rajmahal, the siege of Munger was to be continued but some forces were to be dispatched in his pursuit.[102]

However, Sulaiman Shikoh had to give up his campaign against Shah Shuja because Dara Shikoh urgently summoned him to Agra to help him in his war against the combined forces of Aurangzeb and Murad. Compelled by circumstances, he concluded peace with Shah Shuja and proceeded towards Agra. Therefore, for some time, Shah Shuja was left with no rival and became the undisputed master of the Eastern Provinces. In all his campaigns, Amar Singh, the Bhojpur chief, had given unstinted support to him. In appreciation of his services, Shah Shuja issued a *farman* (since Shuja was now a self-styled Mughal emperor) dated 5 July 1658, assuring him promotion for his services rendered in the campaign against Sulaiman Shikoh. Shah Shuja also noted that he hoped that Amar Singh would continue to provide his sincere services in the future as well. Soon after, Amar Singh was asked to come to Shah Shuja but it appears that he did not visit the latter's court. The reason seems to be that he might have analysed the prevailing condition of Bhojpur and found that even his temporary absence for a few weeks might spell disaster to his small estate on account of the intrigues and mechinations of Koklat Ujjainia. He, therefore, sent his younger brother, Parbal Singh, to receive the rewards on his behalf. He also requested Shah Shuja to take necessary

steps to humble Koklat Ujjainia, who had become a powerful force in the region.[103]

Shah Shuja was unhappy with Koklat Ujjainia because he had joined Dara Shikoh and was present at the side of Sulaiman Shikoh in the battle of Bahadurpur (Feberuary 1658). Therefore, he appointed one of his officers, Syed Jan-i-Alam to punish him. Amar Singh also accompanied Jan-i-Alam, and the combined forces inflicted a crushing defeat on Koklat Ujjainia and forced him out of Bhojpur.

After this victory, Shah Shuja again issued a *farman* to Amar Singh. Its contents, quoted below, clearly shows Shuja's desperate attempt to keep Amar Singh on his side in the future, too.[104]

> The best among the contemporaries and the pillar and the prop among the likes, Amar Singh, being hopeful of receiving royal gifts, may know that since at the present time the facts of his bravery and his efforts shown in company with Syed Jan Alam, the brave and the gallant, and the devoted servant in the act of resisting and punishing the accursed Koklat have been brought to the notice of the enlightened, most sacred and most humble self (Shah Shuja) by the Said Khan (Syed Jan-i-Alam) and they have attracted the extra attention of the Emperor, by way of imperial favor, the robe of honor has been given to him (Amar Singh). In the circumstances, the high and exalted command has received the honor of being issued to the effect that the best among the contemporaries (Amar Singh) grateful to the great and high gift and bounty that has emanated from the excessive royal favors in respect of his, should show his devotion and efforts and in discharging his duties, in assistance and association with the aforesaid Khan (Jan-i-Alam), he (Amar Singh) should make such efforts as might bring more royal favors so that he may become more exalted and high amongst the contemporaries, and that the Said Khan may continue to report to him (Shah Shuja) about his sincerity and devotion.[105]

After the battle of Samugarh (it was fought on 29 May 1658, in which Dara Shikoh was defeated by Aurangzeb), Shah Shuja received all of Bihar in addition to Bengal and Orissa, and Dara Shikoh directed his officers at Allahabad, Varanasi, Chunar, Jaunpur and Rohtas to hand over charge to him. As a result, Shah Shuja found the Eastern Provinces completely at his disposal. However, some of the officers posted in these regions refused to obey the orders of Dara Shikoh. Therefore, Shah Shuja dispatched an army to conquer Rohtas, Chunar, Varanasi and Allahabad. In all these exploits, Amar Singh rendered valuable services for which he won high appreciation from Shah Shuja. The latter was also extremely pleased with Amar Singh on account of his sincere support in exterminating Koklat Ujjainia. This is evident from his *farman* dated 21 November 1658:

> By this time, the light spreading and auspicious *farman* received the honor of being issued and released to the effect that since the accursed and unlucky Koklat (Gokul Chand) had turned his face from the road of obedience to the wilderness of rebellion, he has in consequence of his mischievousness come into the valley of destruction, whereas Amar Singh, the best among the contemporaries and the likes

by sincere faith and pure-heartedness has come into the knowledge of the high (Shah Shuja) for his having rendered loyal and good service, the said prop among the contemporaries (Amar Singh) has been rewarded by way of royal favor with the charge of Bhojpur etc., as detailed below after dispossessing the accursed Koklat (Gokul Chand) and that he has been given the title of 'Raja' by way of distinction among his likes and equals. It is necessary that *mutasaddis* (*peshkars* or head clerks) performing the administration, the *faujdars*, *jagirdars*, and the *karoris* of the time and onwards and the *zamindars*, *chaudhris*, *qanungos, muqaddams*, the tenants, cultivators, all inhabitants and ordinary residents of the said *mahal* should regard the aforesaid Amar Singh as the *raja* of that place. All privileges connected with the above mentioned dismissed one (Gokul Chand *Ujjainia*) must be treated as having been bestowed upon the said (Amar Singh). That the state officers and subjects; all shall do their best in enforcing and obeying this order worthy to be acted upon and that they shall regard him (Amar Singh) as being powerful in discharging his duties and that they shall not disregard his advice which would be conducive to loyalty and good administration and maintenance (*nankar*, etc.) which are in consonance with the old traditional law, are to be dealt with, by him. He has been empowered to appoint or dismiss at his discretion. It is incumbent on the recorded best among the contemporaries (Amar Singh) to remain obedient and loyal to the state with sincerity and good faith. He (Amar Singh) shall leave no stone unturned in performing, loyal, good and meritorious services by associating himself with the officiate of the state along with his followers, shall satisfy all legal demands and dues of the *diwani* with good faith and upright conscience shall make good efforts for the prosperity and progress of the *mahal* (big village) and shall treat every one nicely so that they may be delightful, prosperous, and grateful and the said *mahal* may become more and more prosperous and populated day by day. Treat this with utmost strictness and act according to orders.[106]

However, Shah Shuja could not remain at peace for a long time in the region because the war of succession took a new turn. Aurangzeb, after defeating Dara Shikoh in a battle fought at Dhar-mat and Samugarh, succeeded to the throne, and dispached an army under Muhammad Sultan and Mir Jumla to expel him. In the battle fought at Khajwah, Shah Shuja was defeated and forced to flee towards Tanda. He was chased by Muhammad Sultan and Mir Jumla, and driven out of Bengal to die a miserable death in some unknown place in the Arakan hills. It appears that Amar Singh never betrayed his patron, the unfortunate Shah Shuja, in the time of his vicissitudes. He rendered all possible help to his benefactor. His services were again appreciated by Shah Shuja through a *farman* issued on 22 January 1659 soon after the battle of Khajwah. He writes:

Raja Amar Singh, best among the likes and contemporaries, being honoured with royal gifts, may know that Sabqat Khan, the brave dignified, and Dayanat Khan, the frugal, have repeatedly submitted in letter to the exalted self that the best among the likes (Raja Amar Singh) along with his followers remains present (with Shujâs followers). Thus he has fulfilled his obligations. It is expedient that he should be prepared to appear with full confidence before the light spreading (Shah Shuja), as soon as he is wanted. In the meanwhile he should persuade his son to come with a *wakil* before the *huzur* (Shah Shuja) so that he may explain to the sacred (Shah

Shuja) all the facts about Bhojpur and his brother (Prabal Singh) who is already with the king (Shah Shuja) shall be then sent back. This must be treated with utmost strictness and act according to orders.[107]

In this *farman* of Shah Shuja, high-sounding epithets are not used for Amar Singh. Similarly, Amar Singh is not promised reward or other favours despite the fact that he provided all possible help to Shah Shuja and fulfilled all his other commitments. This might indicate that Shah Shuja had actually become weak as a consequence of his defeat at Khajwah. Moreover, it also appears from a study of the document that Amar Singh was having problems with his kinsmen in his chieftaincy. He was asked to send his son with a *wakil* (prime minister, superior to *wazir*) to explain the problem at Shah Shuja's court. The *farman* also contains information on the presence of Prabal Singh, brother of Amar Singh, in the camp of Shah Shuja. It seems that he had come to Shah Shuja to explain the difficulties of Amar Singh and seek his cooperation. However, it is also possible that he had been kept as a hostage for the safe conduct of Amar Singh, as mutual intrigue, disaffection, political instability and the change of camps had become the order of the day. In the *farman*, it is clearly indicated that Prabal Singh would be sent back after the arrival of Amar Singh's son.

Amar Singh, like many other nobles and local chiefs, shifted his loyalty to Aurangzeb after the defeat of Shah Shuja at Khajwah. The emperor received him favourably and allowed him to continue as the chief of Bhojpur. He was also confirmed in his previous rank and title. Amar Singh continued to help the governor of Bihar in the discharge of his administrative and political responsibilities. The last six years (1659–65) of Amar Singh's life were, on the whole, peaceful. He died in 1665.[108]

Raja Amar Singh, as discussed earlier, played a prominent role in the Eastern Province during the war of succession, especially in the battles fought between Shah Shuja and the imperial army under the command of Sulaiman Shikoh, and afterwards, between Shah Shuja and the army of Aurangzeb under his son, Muhammad Sultan. It goes to his credit that he remained loyal to Shah Shuja even in his worst days and changed his loyalty only after the latter's departure from Bengal. Another important feature of this period in the history of Bhojpur is the emergence of Koklat Ujjainia, a rival of Amar Singh. He became so powerful in the region that Dara Shikoh thought it useful to bring him to his side before fighting a battle against Shah Shuja. However, after the defeat of Dara Shikoh, Koklat Ujjainia was also defeated and expelled by Shah Shuja from the Bhojpur region. It also emerges from our study that the Bhojpur chieftaincy was divided into two rival factions. The warring brothers (Dara and Shuja) took advantage of the situation and both succeeded in getting the support

of the Ujjainias. Thus, Bhojpur presented a divided house during the period of the war of succession and, consequently, could not take full advantage of its support from the Emperor Aurangzeb. How-ever, Amar Singh's reign as the chief of Bhojpur, which lasted for about eighteen years, was quite eventful. Bhojpur, once again, figured prominently in the arena of imperial politics. Amar Singh constructed a large number of buildings in his new capital, Mithila. Several mounds are still there and the ruins of the old fort can be seen outside the present village of Bhojpur.[109]

After the death of Raja Amar Singh, a conflict started between his son, Rudra Singh and his younger brother, Prabal Singh, for the throne of Bhojpur. Rudra Singh ultimately succeeded to the throne after defeating his uncle, Prabal Singh.[110] He waited for seventeen years to get a *mansab* of 1,000/800 and the title of 'Raja'.[111] It seems that the grant of an imperial *mansab* to him was delayed for such a long time because Prabal Singh, after his defeat at the hands of his nephew, went to Delhi and tried to get the chieftainship of the Ujjainias with the support of Emperor Aurangzeb. According to local tradition, he was promised the *gaddi* of Bhojpur if he became a Muslim. Prabal Singh even converted to Islam but was not given the chieftaincy of Bhojpur. The reasons are not clearly mentioned but apparently by that time, Rudra Singh had established himself in Bhojpur, and had showed his complete devotion and loyalty to the emperor. He was also very young and popular among the Ujjainia people. Besides, he was also regarded as the rightful ruler of the chieftaincy, being the eldest son of the deceased Raja Amar Singh. Moreover, the provincial administration had no complaint against him. On the other hand, Prabal Singh lost the confidence and sympathy of the *zamindars* of the region and the people of Bhojpur on account of his becoming a Muslim. Besides, he had become quite old and, thus, had lost the initiative and drive necessary for gaining the cooperation of the powerful elements of the region for regaining possession of his throne. Moreover, he was not in the direct line of succession, being the brother of the former ruler of Bhojpur. Probably keeping all these factors in mind, Rudra Singh was recognized as the ruler of Bhojpur in preference to Prabal Singh. However, Prabal Singh was assigned a *jagir* in the *pargana* of Piru in the *sarkar* of Shahabad and the title of 'Raja' was also conferred on him.[112]

Prabal Singh returned from Delhi to Bhojpur in 1671, completely disappointed and frustrated, but when he was advised to re-embrace Hinduism, he refused to do so. He died in 1672.[113]

In the first seventeen years of his chieftainship (1665–81), Rudra Singh remained loyal to the Mughal government and offered complete cooperation to the provincial administration. He also visited the

imperial court at least on one occasion. There are several references to his administrative activities in the *Akhbarat*. In one such report, it is mentioned that Raja Rudra Singh, after returning from court, went to Shaikh Ibrahim, the *faujdar* of the *sarkar* of Shahabad and informed him that he had been bestowed with the *zamindari* of the dismissed Raja Bhakhtmand Ujjainia (one of the Ujjainia chiefs holding the *mansab* of 500/500). Shaikh Ibrahim communicated this order to all the other *faujdars* of the area and requested them to support Rudra Singh in getting control over the zamindari. Thereupon, Shaikh Ibrahim, along with Rudra Singh, led an expedition against the rebel *raja*. They burnt down the houses of those peasants who had helped Raja Bakhtmand to escape to Gharhi (Teliagarhi). Being hard-pressed, the peasants agreed to help the imperial administration and killed Raja Bakhtmand by stratagem.[114]

From the *Akhbarat,* it also appears that between April and June 1681, Rudra Singh raised the standard of rebellion. The *Akhbarat* states that a *farman* was issued to Jafar Khan, the *subedar* of Bihar, in which he was directed to proceed with Hamid Khan, the *faujdar*, to chastise Rudra Singh. It seems that the rebellion of Rudra Singh was in conformity with the age-long tradition of the Ujjainias. It was an old practice of the Bhojpur chiefs right from the period of the Mughal emperor, Akbar, to remain loyal to the Mughal government for a few years at first and after a decade or two, to rebel. Hence, there was nothing very surprising if Rudra Singh also revolted.[115]

However, Rudra Singh had his own grievances against the Mughals. He had become the chief of Bhojpur as early as 1665 but he was still not conferred with the title of 'Raja' or the usual *mansab* of 1,000 like his predecessors. According to some local traditions, Kunwar Dhir Ujjainia, a rebel, instigated Rudra Singh against the Mughal authority and compelled him to take up arms. Kunwar Dhir was the son of Bikram Shahi of Aswa in *pargana* Piru in the Bhojpur district. His principality having devolved on Rudra Singh, Dhir's forefathers were only allowed the *zamindari* of Asawa and the *pargana* of Piru in Shahabad for the maintenance of the family.[116] But the *zamindars* were very irregular in paying dues to the state and as a result, arrears accumulated. In the reign of Shah Jahan, sometime in 1654, Kunwar Dhir's father was the *zamindar* who was ordered to clear the dues immediately and Dhir was taken captive on the order of the emperor, Shah Jahan in 1654. He was detained at Delhi as a surety for the payment of revenue. However, having been released on a personal surety, he collected troops and began to fight against the Mughals. As he was a childhood friend of Rudra Singh, he appealed to him to help him in his struggle against the imperial authority. It had also been suggested that Kunwar Dhir raised the issue of the re-imposition of

jizya (a tax on the non-Muslims) and the persecution of Hindus to win his support.[117] Rudra Singh, as mentioned earlier, was unhappy with the imperial administration for ignoring his rights. So he unfurled the banner of revolt and expelled imperial officials from the Mithila area along with Kunwar Dhir.

Therefore, Jafar Khan, the *subedar* of Bihar was ordered to suppress the rebellion of Rudra Singh.[118] However, before Jafar Khan could start his campaign against the rebels, he was transferred, and Safi Khan was appointed the governor of Bihar and given the responsibility of crushing the rebellion of the Bhojpur *zamindars*. The campaign got delayed due to the onset of the rainy season. In the meantime, it also came to the notice of the governor that Kunwar Dhir had joined Rudra Singh and the rebels had become quite strong in the Mithila region due to this. Therefore, after the end of the rainy season, Safi Khan, along with Hamid Khan, the *faujdar* marched towards Mithila at the head of a large army. Rudra Singh avoided facing the Mughal forces directly and managed to escape to a nearby dense forest in October 1681.[119] The *Akhbarat* also informs us that twelve *mahals* of the estate of Rudra Singh were given in the charge of *amils* and *karoris*, and the fort at Mithila was razed to the ground.[120] Though Rudra Singh was driven out of his fort, he carried on a guerrilla fight from the place of his hiding. The Mughal army stationed at Mithila felt greatly harassed on account of these raids. Besides, Kunwar Dhir was also creating a lot of trouble in the Tekari region. The alliance between Rudra Singh and Kunwar Dhir was considered dangerous for Mughal interests in Bihar. Hence, to break it, Saif Khan, the governor of Bihar and an old friend of Rudra's father, Amar Singh, personally approached Rudra Singh and was successful in bringing about a reconciliation between him and the Mughal governor of Bihar.[121] Rudra Singh agreed to apologize for his rebellion and make a payment of Rs. 1,30,000 to the Mughal authority as war indemnity. He accepted all these provisions on the assurance that the rank and title held by his father would be restored to him.[122] On the recommendation of Safi Khan, the emperor pardoned Rudra Singh and also restored the title and rank of his father to him on condition that 'Rudra Singh must accompany the imperial army to Bengal for suppressing the rebellion there'.[123] Rudra Singh agreed to obey these orders. Thus, all opposition to the Mughal government in the district of Shahabad came to an end with his submission. Soon after, Kunwar Dhir went underground. *Akhbarat* has rightly mentioned that no rebel *zamindar* existed now in this district (i.e. Shahabad).[124]

Although as mentioned in the *Akhbarat*, a settlement had been reached between the provincial authority and Rudra Singh after the terms were approved by the emperor, his rank and title were not

immediately restored. Perhaps Aurangzeb was not convinced of his complete loyalty. He himself enquired about the situation in the region and the attitude of the *raja*, and only conferred the rank and title on him when he was convinced that the *raja* had left the path of rebellion and completely disassociated himself with Kunwar Dhir. In its report of 29 April 1682, the *Akhbarat* records that 'Rudra Singh Ujjainia, the zamindar of Bhojpur, was given the rank of 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar*. He was deputed with Safi Khan, the governor of Bihar.'[125]

Kunwar Dhir, disillusioned at this turn of events, continued his rebellious activities. He attacked and took into possession a village named Holo Konwari near Betia (in west Champaran) in the *zamindari* of Nand Shahi Jaithiya. Nand Shahi immediately approached the governor of the *suba* and requested his help in getting back his *zamindari* village. Consequently, Rudra Singh was ordered by the governor to punish the Ujjainia rebel and reconquer the lost village. The Bhojpur chief marched to the Betia region with a strong Bhojpuri contingent and defeated Kunwar Dhir.[126]

Sometimes after, Raja Rudra Singh was appointed the *faujdar* of the *sarkar* of Shahabad after the transfer of Shaikh Ibrahim to Badaon.[127] Though this new assignment was only for a short period, it shows that the Ujjainia chief was now able to win back the confidence of the Mughal administration. It appears that the *faujdari* of the *sarkar* of Shahabad was held by the Bhojpur chief only for a few months because Aqidat Khan has been mentioned as the *faujdar* of Bhojpur in 1683. The *Akhbarat* informs us that the services of Rudra Singh were requisitioned for the suppression of the revolt of Kunwar Dhir. It adds that the war between Kunwar Dhir and the combined forces of Raja Rudra Singh and Aqidat Khan was fought on 2 February 1683, and the latter was completely routed by the rebels.[128]

Emboldened by his victory, Kunwar Dhir started making preparations to launch an attack on Ara, the headquarters of the *sarkar* of Shahabad.[129] Aqidat Khan, the *faujdar* of Shahabad, sent an urgent appeal to the Mughal emperor for reinforcements. An imperial *farman* was issued to Ummid Khan, the *subedar* of Bihar and Tahmasp Khan, the *faujdar* of Chainpur (Bhabhua), for rendering all possible help to Aqidat Khan. Besides, the latter was also asked to seek the help and cooperation of the local *zamindars* for crushing the rebellion of Kunwar Dhir. When the rebel chief came to know about the preparations of the *faujdar* of Shahabad, he marched towards Ara and fled to Gorakhpur from there.

The Bhojpur chief helped the *amils* of the *parganas* of Manjhi and Narhan in the collection of revenue from the recalcitrant *zamindars* of the *sarkar* of Saran. He was pleased to render this desired assistance and on account of his active help and cooperation, the revenue arrears

of the Mughal government were realized.[130] The services of Raja Rudra Singh were highly appreciated by the imperial government. *Jagirs* worth an annual revenue of 80 lakh of *dams* (more than Rs. 2 lakh) in the *pargana* of Haveli Shahabad were granted to him as reward for the services rendered. Earlier, these *jagirs* had belonged to Shaikh Ibrahim, the *faujdar* of Shahabad.[131]

In the 27th regnal year of Aurangzeb (1684), Rudra Singh was granted the privilege of *Bhai Saruma,*[132] which was enjoyed by the previous chiefs of Bhojpur.[133] Sometime in 1685, he was also granted the village of Belawar in *pargana* of Danwar, in the *sarkar* of Shahabad.[134] In 1687, Raja Rudra Singh was empowered to collect 2.5 per cent of revenue as *rasoom-i-rajgi*[135] from the *pargana* of Kharid in the *sarkar* of Jaunpur in the *suba* of Allahabad.[136] He was awarded a sum of Rs. 1,500 for special expenses in 1690 and was directed to collect the stipulated amount from the villages of this *pargana*.[137]

Taking advantage of his good relations with the Mughals, Raja Rudra Singh tried to consolidate his position in his own chieftaincy. From a security point of view, he shifted his capital from Mithila to Buxar.[138] Mithila had been destroyed by the Mughals when he had rebelled against them during 1680–1. His choice fell on Buxar because it was located on the bank of the holy river Ganga and it also lay nearer to his *jagirs* in the *suba* of Allahabad.

Meanwhile, Kunwar Dhir, who had fled to Gorakhpur, established his headquarters at Barhaj in the dense and impenetrable jungles there and built a strong fortress. He again started plundering imperial territories and harassing the officials posted there. Raja Rudra Singh was deputed to suppress the rebellious activities of Kunwar Dhir once more. The successive defeats suffered by Kunwar Dhir at the hands of Rudra Singh convinced the former that he would not be able to humble the latter in open battle because of the vast resources at his command.[139] He also knew that unless Rudra Singh was eliminated, he would have no future in the Bhojpur region. Therefore, to fulfil his ambition, he hatched a conspiracy and poisoned Rudra Singh.

The poison worked and the *raja* felt that his end was near. However, he managed to reach the Buxar fort.[140] Once there, he instructed his eldest wife to declare his cousin, Mandhata Singh (son of Prabal Singh), as his successor after his death. The eldest queen did as instructed by her dying husband. It was announced in public that Raja Rudra Singh had crowned Mandhata Singh as his successor, and this was accepted by the nobles and the people of Bhojpur, as well also by the Mughal government.[141]

Raja Rudra Singh died in 1699.[142] He had ruled for thirty-four years successfully and his services to the Mughal government were duly recognized. He had enjoyed the confidence of the Mughal emperor to

the extent he was appointed, although temporarily, the *faujdar* of the *sarkar* of Shahabad. It was, indeed, a rare honour for him.

Although Raja Rudra Singh was succeeded by his cousin, Mandhata Singh, son of his uncle, Prabal Singh, as the chief of Bhojpur in 1699. Prabal Singh had one other son named Sujan Singh who was equally brave and ambitious. He was extremely affectionate towards his older brother, Mandhata Singh, and promised to remain loyal to him. In their early life, they had suffered together because of a family feud.[143] In 1679, *jagirs* worth 12,58,000 *dams* (i.e. Rs. 3,14,500) in Haveli of the *sarkar* of Shahabad, were also awarded to them, which formed a part of the *jagir* of Raja Rudra Singh, the former Ujjainia chief of Bhojpur.[144] Later on, both of them worked in close cooperation with the provincial officials of Bihar and jointly received imperial favours during the lifetime of Raja Rudra Singh. In 1684, they were assigned the village of Baharanpur along with Sonbarsa in the *pargana* of Behia for their maintenance.[145] According to another Persian document, we learn that Ghulam Muhammad, the *shiqdar* of the *pargana* of Samal, in the *sarkar* of Shahabad, agreed to pay the revenue of the *pargana* jointly to Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh as per the terms of the *qabuliyat*.[146] This grant is indicative of the fact that both the brothers enjoyed the confidence of the Mughal government and worked well with each other during the chieftainship of Raja Rudra Singh.

Mandhata Singh retained Buxar as his headquarters till 1702 but shifted his capital to Mithila in the same year.[147] It had become an age-old tradition of the Ujjainia *rajas* that the chieftains frequently changed their capitals soon after coming to the throne. Mandhata Singh considered Mithila centrally located from where he could administer his chieftaincy in a better way. Besides, he had childhood memories associated with it. Local tradition is of the view that this was the most important factor for the change of capital. Though the capital was shifted from Buxar to Mithila, the widow Maharani Devi Kunwar (the eldest wife of late Raja Rudra Singh) decided to stay at Buxar because her late husband had a close association with the town. Due to this and also because it was a holy place situated on the bank of the Ganga, the town remained prosperous even after the change of capital.[148]

Mandhata Singh was very keen that his younger brother also take some responsibility in the administration of the chieftaincy and the following arrangements were made: Mandhata Singh himself looked after the general administration of the estate with Mithila as his headquarters,[149] while Sujan Singh, his younger brother, was given the command of the army. He was also entrusted with the responsibility of looking after the administration of Jagdishpur and adjoining areas from his headquarters at there.[150] In the beginning, the arrangement

made by Mandhata Singh worked very well but Kunwar Dhir, who had attempted to capture Bhojpur at the time of Rudra Singh's death, attacked Buxar and occupied several villages of the *parganas* of Piru and Nonar.[151] Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh failed to check the advantage of Kunwar Dhir and appealed to Prince Azim-us Shan (the grandson of Aurangzeb), the governor of Bihar, to protect them and the chieftancy from the rebel onslaught. The prince took them under his protection and issued a *nishan* in 1705, directing Muhammad Ali, the imperial *bakhshi* to proceed to Bhojpur for maintaining order and security, and to give due honour and eminence to Mandhata Singh.[152] Mandhata Singh was also ordered to extend full cooperation to Muhammad Ali in his work.[153] As a result of the efforts of the imperial *bakhshi*, order was restored in Bhojpur and Kunwar Dhir had to withdraw from the areas that he had occupied.

Mandhata Singh felt obliged to the prince and out of a sense of gratitude, gave every possible help and cooperation to him in his administrative work. He was granted the *jagir* of the *pargana* of Kopachi in the *sarkar* of Ghazipur in the *suba* of Allahabad for the observance of *rasoom rajgi*[154] and also for meeting the expenses of the Bhojpur officials for performing their governmental duties.[155] The situation took a new turn in 1707 after the departure of Azim-us Shan to Delhi. Syed Husain Ali Khan, the new governor of Bihar, was a strong and efficient administrator. He started realizing the land revenue with a free hand. As the Bhojpur chieftaincy was in arrears, the governor sent an army to force Mandhata Singh to pay the entire dues. Kunwar Dhir took advantage of the situation and joined the camp of the Bihar governor against the Bhojpur chief in this conflict.

Unfortunately, Mandhata Singh became a victim of the conspiracy jointly hatched by his younger brother, Sujan Singh and Kunwar Dhir. As long as Janki Bharthi Gosain the mother of Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh was alive, the relationship between the two brothers remained cordial. The brothers had actually been brought up by Janki Bharthi Gosain all by herself because her husband, Prabal Singh, remained imprisoned at Delhi for a long time. Even in these adverse circumstances, she had provided her sons with the best possible education and other necessities of life. This must have created a great impression on them and they obeyed their mother's orders without any reservation. Hence, during her lifetime, both of them were affectionate towards each other and lived in complete harmony. But after her death, differences cropped up between the two mainly because of the usual clash for political power. The main cause of friction was an area assigned in *jagir* in 1679 by the Mughals to the two brothers jointly during the lifetime of Rudra Singh (it has been mentioned earlier). Problems related to the management of the

assigned villages and the distribution of income aggravated. Kunwar Dhir, who was waiting for an opportunity to get support from the Bhojpur chief for his own cause, widened their differences and succeeded in winning Sujan Singh over to his side. Besides, the dowager Rani Mahadevi, the eldest wife of Raja Rudra Singh, was displeased with Mandhata Singh because the latter had deserted Buxar (established by her late husband and with which she had an emotional attachment), the headquarters of her late husband, and shifted to Mithila. She considered Mandhata's action most ungrateful because he could only succeed to the throne with her crucial support. Thus, three powerful forces combined to oppose Mandhata Singh. It may be said that a triple alliance was formed consisting of the dowager queen of Bhojpur, Mahadevi; the arch-rebel and an enemy of Mandhata Singh, Kunwar Dhir, and Sujan Singh, the younger brother of Mandhata Singh whom they jointly conspired to murder. The conspiracy was successfully carried out and Mandhata Singh was brutally murdered in 1708. Sujan Singh's desire of succeeding to the Bhojpur throne was not fulfilled, though, because he, too, was murdered by one of the loyal servants of Mandhata Singh.[156]

Raja Horil Singh succeeded to the throne after the death of his father, Raja Mandhata Singh and ruled till 1746. He made Mathla (now a small village in the Buxar subdivision of Shahabad) his headquarters. His succession as the Ujjainia chief of Bhojpur marked a turning point in the history of Shahabad. The Bhojpur principality was now divided into three chieftaincies. One was that of Horil Singh with its capital at Mathla and the two other chieftaincies were those of Jagdishpur and Buxar under Udwant Singh and Budh Singh, respectively. The latter two were the cousins of Horil Singh and the sons of Sujan Singh.[157] Horil Singh was given the title of 'Raja' but his *mansab* was reduced from 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* to 500 *zat* and 400 *sawar*.[158] He was very unhappy with this reduction of his rank and made an appeal against this decision to Emperor Bahadur Shah to no effect.

Kunwar Dhir, a rebel chief of Bhojpur who had created a lot of disturbance against the Mughals in Aurangzeb's reign during the end of the seventeenth century, again started looting, plundering and burning the different villages of Bhojpur. He created terror in the region, which forced the *nazim* of Bihar to send forces to check his inroads. Kunwar Dhir died in 1712 but his work of loot and plunder was continued by his son, Sudhist Narayan.[159]

Aurangzeb died in 1707 and was succeeded by his son, Bahadur Shah who ruled till 1712. After Bahadur Shah's death, his son, Jahandar Shah, succeeded to the throne after defeating his younger brother, Azim-us Shan. After few months, his position was challenged

by his nephew, Farrukh Siyar, the son of Azim-us Shan. Farrukh Siyar came to Patna and stayed at the famous Bagh Jafar Khan. He wanted to win over some of the important nobles and *zamindars* of the Bihar *suba* for the future contest for the Mughal throne. Syed Husain Ali Khan was won over by Farrukh Siyar who appealed to the *zamindars* of Bihar to join the latter.[160] Raja Horil Singh found an opportunity to join Farrukh Siyar's army with an Ujjainia force of 500 infantry and 400 cavalry. The *raja* was given the responsibility to look after the family members of the prince at Patna. Farrukh Siyar went to Delhi along with Syed Husain Ali Khan to try his luck against Jahandar Shah.[161] He captured the Mughal throne with the help of the Syed brothers in 1713. The services of Horil Singh were appreciated by the Mughal emperor and his earlier *mansab* of 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* was restored to him through a *farman* of 16 October 1715.[162]

Farrukh Siyar's reign (1712–19) covers the periods of the *subedari* or *naib subedari* of Bihar by Ghairat Khan (1712–14), Mir Jumla (1715), Sarbuland Khan (1716–18) and, partly, of Khan Zaman Khan (1718–21). During 1712–13, Sudhist Narayan had rebelled against Mughal authority, and created terror and disturbance in the Shahabad area. He had mobilized around 30,000 horsemen and foot soldiers from amongst his kinsfolk.[163] The Company's merchants requested the *subedar* of Bihar to provide them with an escort for crossing the territories of Shahabad. Their request was considered sympathetically and Ghairat Khan, the *subedar*, provided a contingent of 200 horsemen to accompany them upto Sasaram and another small troop of fifty cavalry, which accompanied them to Allahabad. The Ujjainias under their rebel leader, Sudhist Narayan, carried out raids in the *parganas* around Patna, usurped many fertile *jagir mahals* and threatened to block the dispatch of royal treasure to the imperial capital.[164] Mir Jumla was appointed as the governor of Bihar and Bengal on 16 December 1714 and was entrusted with suppressing the rebellion of Sudhist Narayan. He reached Patna in June 1715. By then, Sudhist Narayan had become so powerful that Mir Jumla failed to chastise him even though he had an army of around 20,000, which included a special battalion of eight to nine thousand Mughal veterans.[165] Mir Jumla appointed Sidi Qaim as the *kotwal* of the city, and ordered him to see that gambling and thefts did not take place. He was also directed to ensure that no one collected any amount over and above the sanctioned revenue, and that the *zamindars* did not collect arms. One *Akhbarat* records that on entering the city, Mir Jumla distributed Rs. 1,000 among the poor townsmen, held court and performed obeisance to the *subedari* of the Bihar *suba*.[166]

However, he was more interested in court politics at Delhi and after a few unsuccessful attempts to get permission to return to the capital,

he left Patna abruptly within a short time of his arrival there.[167] He was succeeded by Sarbuland Khan as the governor of the Bihar *suba* in November 1715 and Sarbuland's son, Khanazad Khan, was appointed as the *faujdar* of Shahabad.[168] Sarbuland Khan was a man of strong determination. He led several expeditions against the local *zamindars*, and was able to establish peace and order in the province. He was assisted by the Ujjainia chiefs, Raja Horil Singh, Raja Udwant Singh and Budh Singh in his work in Bihar. Sarbuland Khan led an expedition against Sudhist Narayan with a force of 20,000 cavalry and 30,000 infantry, and after many skirmishes, succeeded in defeating him and capturing many of his strongholds. The rebel chief was seriously wounded and escaped to an inaccessible region where he later died.[169] Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan, the author of *Muntakhab-ul Lubab*, says that the Ujjainias had grown powerful, captured many fertile *mahals* of the *jagirdars* of the province and they had carried their depredation even up to Patna.[170] In October 1717, Sudhist Narayan had raised a more serious disturbance when he besieged Alam Beg, the *qiladar* of the Ara fort. Sarbuland Khan sent his deputy, Muhammad Qaim Bakhshi and Muhammad Naim, the *darogha* of the artillery, with a force and the rebels were defeated. The ten *garhis* (forts) occupied by them were brought under control and imperial *thanas* were set up there.[171]

A more graphic description of this important expedition is available in the book of Murtuza Ila Yar Khan whose father and friend, Shaikh Abdullah, took a leading part in it.[172] These two had led the vanguard of the *subedar's* army. Sudhist Narayan had a force of 30,000 horsemen and foot soldiers. He suffered his first defeat and many casualties of his forces, and retired to the forest of Padrona (Gorakhpur district). But he suddenly emerged from the forests, attacked the forces of Ila Yar Khan and Shaikh Abdullah, and defeated them. However, the forces of Sarbuland Khan again rallied around their master and began to ply their guns and cannon, which were charged with iron and lead pieces, proving very effective. The rebel *raja* was wounded and fled, thus giving victory to Sarbuland Khan.

It is interesting to note that Sarbuland Khan in his campaigns against the Ujjainias and other turbulent *zamindars*, his strength lay principally in the fact that he could requisition the services of the other *zamindars* for his purposes. This, he could achieve by initiating with them a new arrangement, generally described in our sources as *ta'ahhud, muqarrari istimrari* and *ijara,* all of which meant revenue farming, with detailed yearly *tashkhis* (assessment and fixation).[173] Towards the last years of Farrukh Siyar's reign (1712–19), the new arrangement with the *zamindars* began to be encouraged. Horil Singh, for instance, secured *muqarrari istimrari* (fixed permanent) contracts

for a number of villages in addition to *jagirs* and *nankars* in his *zamindari* in the period between 1716 and 1724.[174] In the first year of the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah Rangeela, the *raja* was granted the village of Sakrimal in the *pargana* of Sasaram, in the *sarkar* of Rohtas as a *jagir*.[175] In the same year, the grant of Bhojpur as a *jagir* was confirmed.[176] In 1721, the *raja* received a *muqarrari* of the annual revenue of Rs. 19,698 and 14 *annas* in the *pargana* of Bihea, in the *sarkar* of Shahabad.[177] In the same year, a *muqarrari istimrari* of the value of Rs. 13,754 and 6 *annas* out of the *pargana* of Danwar in the *sarkar* of Shahabad was settled with Raja Horil Singh.[178] In the fifth regnal year of Muhammad Shah Rangeela (1723), Horil Singh was given eleven *mahals* as *nankar* and *inam* (ten *mahals* in the *sarkar* of Shahabad and one *mahal* in the *pargana* of Sasaram in the *sarkar* of Rohtas).[179]

A family feud had arisen between Raja Horil Singh and Sudhist Narayan over the possession of some *jagirs* in the *sarkar* of Shaha-bad. Sudhist Narayan claimed that the *jagir* belonged to his an-cestors.[180] The claim of Raja Horil Singh was based on the fact that his ancestors were recognized heads of the Ujjainia clan in Shahabad and, therefore, the *jagirs* belonged to them. Emperor Farrukh Siyar ordered that a thorough enquiry be made into the dispute.[181] Ultimately, the *jagirs* in the *sarkar* of Shahabad, which had a total value of 56,72,200 *dams* in the *pargana* of Haveli Shahabad, were awarded to Raja Horil Singh. The same *jagir* was also approved through a *farman* issued by the Mughal emperor, Muhammad Shah, who succeeded to the throne in 1719.[182]

Raja Horil Singh continued to render valuable services to the Mughal governors of Bihar in suppressing the revolts of refractory *zamindars* in the districts of Shahabad and Patna. He helped the *subedar* of Bihar, Khan Zaman Khan, in suppressing the rebellion of his own kinsmen, the Ujjainias. Khan Zaman Khan was very happy with the services provided by Raja Horil Singh. He granted him the *pargana* of Bhojpur as a *jagir*.[183] Through another *sanad* bearing the same date and seal, Horil Singh received a grant of the village of Bhathari in the *pargana* of Sasaram in the *sarkar* of Rohtas as *muqarrari* on payment of Rs. 1,200 as revenue.

Nawab Fakhr-ud-Daula was appointed the governor of Bihar in 1727. He was the last independent Mughal governor of Bihar for after him, the governorship of Bihar became an appendage of Bengal.[184] Nawab found that Raja Udwant Singh of Jagdishpur had rebelled against the Mughals. He sought the services of the local *zamindars* in the suppression of this rebellion. Nawab Fakhr-ud-Daula was assisted by Raja Horil Singh, the Ujjainia chief; Tribhuvan Singh of Tekari[185] and Pahalwan Singh of Nokha.[186] The combined forces of the Mughals

and of the local *zamindars* stormed and captured the fortress of Jagdishpur. Raja Udwant Singh was forced to seek shelter with Nawab Abdullah of Ghazipur.[187] With a contingent of troops provided by Abdullah, Udwant Singh returned to Jagdishpur and created trouble by capturing some officers of Nawab Fakhr-ud-Daula. However, after some time, he submitted to the nawab and sought his pardon.[188]

In reward for his services to Nawab Fakhr-ud-Daula for the suppression of the revolt of Udwant Singh, Raja Horil Singh was given some grants. In the tenth regnal year of Muhammad Shah (1729), Raja Horil Singh received the *nankar* of the annual revenue of Rs. 2,000 in the *pargana* of Behia, in the *sarkar* of Shahabad with effect from 1727.[189] Through a *parwana* issued by Nawab Fakhr-ud-Daula, dated 9th Rajab, the twelfth year of Muhammad Shah's reign (January 1731), Raja Horil Singh was allowed to possess the *pargana* of Haveli Shahabad or Bhojpur as a *jagir*.[190]

Although the rebellion of Udwant Singh was suppressed for a short period, he remained powerful and after some time, began to create disturbances in the region of Bihea. Nawab Fakhr-ud-Daula decided to appoint someone in Bihea to keep constant watch over the activities of Udwant Singh. He found Raja Horil Singh as a suitable candidate and appointed him as the *Naib Fauzdar Amanat Washidar wa Karkun* of Bihea with the responsibility of maintaining peace and order in the region in 1733.[191] Bihea was only 10 km north of Jagdishpur; the fortress of Udwant Singh, and Raja Horil Singh could easily keep vigil over the activities of the former.

Through a *parwana* issued by Qamruddin Khan Chin Bahadur Itmad-ud-Daula II, the chief *wazir* of the empire during 1724–48, dated 11th Rajab, 17th RY (26 November 1734), the *raja* was granted the pargana of Ara in the sarkar of Shahabad and *tappa* Sasaram in the sarkar of Rohtas as *nankar*. As per another *parwana* bearing the date 11th Rajab, 15th RY (26 November 1732), Raja Horil Singh received sixty-five villages in the *tappa* of Sasaram with effect from 1732.[192]

Udwant Singh of Jagdishpur now developed hatred and jealousy towards Raja Horil Singh. The latter had received a large number of *jagirs* from the *subedars* of Bihar and the Mughal authority. Besides, when Udwant Singh rebelled against the Mughals, Raja Horil Singh had helped the Mughals to suppress his rebellion instead of supporting him. Moreover, the appointment of Raja Horil Singh as the *naib faujdar* of Bihea in order to keep vigil over the activities of Udwant Singh further increased the hostilities between the two. Budh Singh of Buxar was also unhappy with Raja Horil Singh as the *jagir* of Chausa, which he had claimed for himself, had been offered to the latter by the Mughal authority. All these factors brought the two Ujjainia chiefs of Jagdishpur and Buxar together against Raja Horil Singh. In 1743,

they attacked Mathla, his headquarters, and defeated him. Raja Horil Singh escaped to Tilouthu (a village in the Sasaram subdivision of Shahabad) where he took refuge with Raja Shah Mal.[193] Raja Horil Singh felt humiliated on account of his defeat by the Ujjainia chiefs. He also became unhappy with the Mughals as they did not help him in the time of his difficulty. He was granted a *Bhaiyagiri*[194] by the Mughal authority for the security of his life and property in 1744 but it failed to satisfy him.

Alivardi Khan became the governor of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in 1740. He appointed Haibat Jung, the father of Siraj-ud Daula, as his deputy in Bihar and he held this post from 1740 to 1748.[195] Raja Horil Singh (Bharat Singh[196]) now joined the camp of Udwant Singh, the rebel *zamindar* of Jagdishpur. It seems that he became unhappy with the Mughals because they did not support him at the time of his battle against Udwant Singh and Budh Singh of Buxar in 1743. It also appears that Haibat Jung wanted to realize a huge amount of arrears of government dues from the *raja* with a firm hand, which forced him to join the rebel camp.

Haibat Jung led an expedition against Raja Horil Singh and Udwant Singh, and drove them from their strongholds. Their chieftaincies were destroyed, and their regions were freed from their disturbance and violence. Haibat Jung, by this remarkable success, established his reputation as a strong administrator. Within a short time, he completely subjugated the rebel *zamindars* and brought peace to the *suba*. He also got Raushan Khan Tarhi, the *faujdar* of Shahabad, murdered under the false suspicion that he was in a conspiracy with the rebel Ujjainias.[197]

After his defeat, Raja Horil Singh sent a petition to Emperor Muhammad Shah and requested him to sanction Rs. 70,000 as *nankar* and *saddoi* from the *parganas* of the *sarkars* of Shahabad and Rohtas. In order to win over the sympathy of the emperor, the *raja* reminded him of his loyalty to the Mughals four decades and of how he had rendered valuable services for the cause of the Mughals. He also showed that he desperately needed financial support from the Mughal authority. At last, Raja Horil Singh's plea was considered and through a *parwana*, he was granted Rs. 40,000 as *nankar* and *saddoi* on 10th *Zilhijja*, 27th RY 10 January 1746.[198]

Haibat Jung died in 1748 and the *nizamat* of Bihar was assigned to Siraj-ud-Daula with Raja Janaki Ram as his deputy and the latter governed Bihar for four years (1748–52). After the death of Raja Janaki Ram in 1752, Raja Ram Narayan was appointed as the deputy governor of the province and he held this position until 1764.[199] The mid-eighteenth century witnessed the peak time of the decline and disintegration of the Mughal empire, which led to lawlessness and

disorder not only in Bihar but all over the country. This is the period when the British East India Company began to establish its hold on Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Raja Horil Singh now shifted his headquarters from Mathla to Dumraon. Since then, it remained the capital of his descendants. Although during the closing years of his reign, Raja Horil Singh was not a happy man but he was a successful chief as a whole. He accumulated extensive *jagirs* in his chieftaincy. When he died in 1746, he was succeeded by his son, Raja Chattardhari Singh who was also given the *mansab* of 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar*. He devoted his time on the development of the Ujjainia chieftaincy and made Dumraon a beautiful city. He constructed several buildings which were required for different purposes, such as a *kutchery* (court), house for accommodating increased troops and so on. He also encouraged trade and commerce by inviting traders and merchants to his capital city, Dumraon, and providing them with all faci-lities.[200]

Raja Chattardhari Singh established good relations with the Mughal authority of Bihar and extended cooperation to them in their administrative work. The Mughal authority was pleased with his friendly gesture and granted him many rewards. He was granted a *bhaiyagiri* for the maintenance of his chieftaincy.[201] He was also given *nankar* and *muqarrari* worth Rs. 5,000 in *parganas* in Bhojpur, Dinwar and Bihea from Nawab Ahmad Khan Bahadur, the *nazim* of Bengal and Bihar.[202]

After some time, though, Raja Chattardhari Singh's relations with the Mughal officials became hostile. It seems that he did not clear the arrears due from the chieftaincy. The governor of Bengal also became suspicious of the Raja as the other *zamindars* of the *suba* misguided the governor against him out of jealousy. This led to embittered relations between the Mughals and the *raja*.[203] Raja Chattardhari Singh openly rebelled against the Mughals. The latter attacked his headquarters and defeated him whereby he escaped to the forest and adopted the policy of guerrilla warfare. After some time with the help of Kunwar Bikramjit Singh, his eldest son and his kinsmen of Jagdishpur, he was able to defeat the Mughals and recaptured the fortress of Dumraon.[204]

Alivardi Khan had ruled over the three provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa since 1740, had successfully administered them and pushed back the invasion of the Marathas in Bihar several times. He had also defeated them on a number of occasions. When he died in 1756, the control of the nawab of Bengal over Bihar was weakened as the fateful battle of Plassey in 1757 limited his power and position over the province. Hence, a political vaccum occurred in the Bihar *suba*. As a result, different political forces wanted to take advantage of the chaotic condition. Taking advantage of the disturbed situation in

Bihar, the Ujjainia chiefs of Bhojpur stopped paying taxes to the nawab's treasury, became involved in faction politics in Bihar and sided with the group that protected their interests most.

After the battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar ascended the throne of Bengal. His power and position were curtailed by the British East India Company and he slowly became puppet in its hands. Once when he wanted to punish the leading officers and *zamindars* of Bihar, i.e. *diwan* and Rai Durlabh and Ram Narayan, the deputy governor of Bihar, for disloyalty, the British held his hand. *Zamindars* like Kamgar Khan of Narhat and Samoy, Sunder Singh of Tikari, Pahalwan Singh of Bhojpur, and Bishun Singh of Siris and Cotamba manifested a spirit of opposition against Mir Jafer and formed an alliance among themselves. Jean Law, the French adventurer, came to their assistance. It seems that the *zamindars* of Bihar did not like the new regime of the British East India Company. They might have rebelled against the Company but Jagat Seth was against of any such rebellion. Jagat Seth, in alliance with the Company, was interested in trade and commerce to earn money. The *zamindars* of Bihar were landed aristocrats. They owned a vast area of land and, therefore, trade had no importance for them. They had sufficient wealth of their own. Thus, the interests of the Company and Jagat Seth clashed with that of the *zamindars*. The latter did not like the extension of the powers of the Company in Bihar. They were apprehensive that it would subjugate them after the battle of Plassey. Therefore, they were of the firm determination to rise against the Company and Mir Jafar. But Jagat Seth did not see eye-to-eye with this scheme of the Bihar *zamindars*. He was not ready to cooperate with them in this task. He had his own mercantile interest and, therefore, wanted peace throughout Bengal. Jagat Seth lent a huge amount of money to the English and French Companies and earned a lot from this transaction. He also used to help the Mughal's royal families with money.[205]

However, Robert Clive, the head of the British East India Company, realized the political importance of the Bhojpur chiefs of Bihar. On his advice, Nawab Mir Jafar invited the Ujjainia chiefs to attend his darbar on 23 February 1758 at Murshidabad. There, Miran, the son of Mir Jafar, was appointed the nawab of Bihar and Raja Ram Narayan was given the responsibility of the deputy governor of the province.

Although the British tried to win over the Ujjainia chiefs to their side, they extended their support to the Mughal prince, Ali Gauhar (future Shah Alam II), who had attacked Bihar in 1759 with a force of 30,000 troops. Actually, the prince had been encouraged to undertake this expedition by Pahalwan Singh, the Ujjainia chief of Nokha, Sundar Singh of Tekari and Balwant Singh of Varanasi. When Clive came to know about this invasion, he moved to Patna from Calcutta

with his sepoys. On his approach, the prince abandoned the siege of Patna and left the region by April 1759. Hence, the threat of invasion came to an end.[206] However, Clive was angry with Pahalwan Singh for inviting the prince to invade Bihar. He decided to punish him, came to Shaha-bad in May 1759 and attacked Nokha, the headquarters of the Ujjainia chief. Pahalwan Singh submitted to Clive without any fight and promised to pay ten years' arrears of revenue to Ram Narayan, the deputy governor of Bihar.[207]

During the end of 1759, Ali Gauhar tried his luck in Bihar for the second time. In the beginning, Pahalwan Singh joined Ram Narayan in his contest against the prince, with a large force. But very soon he betrayed the cause and joined the imperial forces under the command of Prince Ali Gauhar or Shah Alam II.[208] It is pointed out that in one of the battles between Raja Ram Narayan and the prince, the former was defeated because of the betrayal of the Ujjainia chief along with the other chiefs of Bihar.[209] After some time, Shah Alam II left Bihar and went to Bengal.

Mir Qasim succeeded Mir Jafar as the nawab of Bengal. He was ambitious and wanted to get out of the control of the British East India Company. He made an effort to establish his supremacy over the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and was determined to subjugate the refractory *zamindars* of Bihar.[210]

The Bhojpur chiefs had also rebelled against Nawab Mir Qasim's authority in Bihar. It was a challenge for him to suppress their rebellion and bring them under control if he wanted to establish his supremacy over Bihar. The nawab realized a possible threat from the Ujjainia chiefs and it was considered one of the factors for his shift of capital from Murshidabad to Munger temporarily in June 1762.[211] He was also not happy with them because they had not cleared their huge arrears, which they had promised Clive to do. Some of the Ujjainia chiefs, especially Pahalwan Singh, had made an alliance with Ram Narayan whom the nawab disliked.[212]

However, the attack of Mir Qasim on the Ujjainia chiefs is criticized by the *Shahabad District Gazetteers*, which mention that justice had not been done to the latter. The nawabs of Bengal and the *subedars* had ruined the Bihar *suba*. If the Ujjainias were rebelling against the governors of Bengal, it was justified because the latter had also rebelled against the real rulers, the Mughals.[213] However, Mir Qasim's invasion of Shahabad was approved of by the British East India Company.[214] Some of his trusted officers expressed their happiness over this expedition against the Ujjainia chiefs.[215]

Mir Qasim collected his own contingents, along with small British forces and marched to attack Shahabad in November 1761.[216] It seems that he led the expedition against the Bhojpur *zamindars* with a large

army, as Ghulam Hussain Tabatabai gives a graphic description of it: 'The nawab was at the head of an army as numerous as the multitude at the day of judgement.'[217] The Bhojpur expedition is one of the important events of his reign. Mir Qasim left Patna in November 1761. He dispatched Mir Raushan Ali Khan with some troops in advance. When the Ujjainia chiefs (Pahalwan Singh and others) came to know about this, they decided not to confront Mir Qasim in an open field. The chiefs sent their families away to safety and themselves escaped to Ghazipur, Gorakhpur, Awadh and Varanasi.[218] Chattardhari Singh of Dumraon also left his fort and went to Gorakhpur, returning to his headquarters only when Mir Qasim left Shahabad.[219]

After reaching Shahabad, Mir Qasim went to Nokha, the headquarters of the Ujjainia chief, Pahalwan Singh. He was surprised to find that the fort was totally abandoned. He demolished a portion of it and plundered the villages around it. The nawab captured the fort of Jagdishpur in December 1761. He occupied all the forts of Bhojpur in the beginning of January 1762. He then moved to Sasaram, stayed there for a few days and then proceeded to Rohtasgarh, imprisoning the *diwan* of the fort, Shah Mal. The latter was suspected to be in league with the rebel chiefs of Shahabad. Another officer was deputed to hold the charge of Sasaram and Chainpur.[220] After making these administarative arrangements at Rohtasgarh and Sasaram, Mir Qasim proceeded to Jagdishpur, the headquarters of another Ujjainia chief, Raja Udwant Singh. Jagdishpur was also completely deserted. Here too, Mir Qasim destroyed a portion of the fort and burnt the houses of the kinsmen of Ujjainia chief. He then went to Dumraon where his soldiers dismantled the fort and harassed the people of the area. Mir Qasim appointed a trusted officer to take the charge of the Bhojpur region. Sombre (popularly called Samru), a German adventurer, was appointed commandant with his headquarters at Buxar and a strong contingent of soldiers was placed at his disposal. Mir Qasim also made an arrangement for the regular collection of revenue from the *zamindars* of Bhojpur. All of Bhojpur was divided into several *parganas* and one *tahsildar* was appointed in each one. Mir Qasim made all kinds of arrangements for the effective administration of Bhojpur and then left for Munger.[221]

As soon as he left Shahabad, the rebel Ujjainia chiefs returned to their chieftaincies, drove away the officers who had been given charge of each *pargana* by the nawab and also repaired their damaged fortresses. They had suffered losses of property and destruction of their houses but they soon recovered. They became great enemies of Mir Qasim as he had caused the widespread destruction of the property of the Ujjainia kinsmen of Bhojpur.[222] Ironically, they might have been of great help to him in his struggle against the English East

India Company if he had won them over.

Mir Qasim's efforts to assert his position and to become powerful could not be fulfilled. As he had betrayed Mir Jafar, his father-in-law, for the lure of his position, he faced the same difficulties. The continuous English interference made his position ineffective and ridiculed his position in the eyes of his countrymen. Mir Qasim realized that he had been entangled in a trap. He became desperate and challenged the Company but was defeated in 1763. He fled to Awadh and organized a confederacy with the nawab of Awadh and the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam II, in a final bid to oust the British East India Company from Bengal. However, they were defeated by the superior arms of the Company in the Battle of Buxar on 22 October 1764. It is interesting to note that the Ujjainia chief, Raja Chattardhari Singh of Dumraon joined the camp of the British East India Company and helped them in the crucial battle of Buxar.[223] Now the English became the unchallenged power in northern India. The nawab of Bengal became a tool in the hands of the English, the nawab of Awadh, an ally and the emperor, their pensioner. The entire territory from Bengal to Allahabad lay at their feet and the road to Delhi was open.

Raja Chattardhari Singh ruled for a few more years with loyalty to the British and died in 1770. After his death, his son Bikramjit Singh (1770–1805) succeeded to the throne.[224] He faced difficulties as Bihar went through a terrible famine during 1770–1.[225] Thou-sands of people died due to starvation and the lack of adequate relief measures on the part of the government. The Shahabad chieftaincy was also affected by this famine and the production of crops was lessened. Therefore, the peasants were not able to pay their revenue as per the demand. Bikramjit Singh, who was assigned the responsibility of collecting the revenue of the British East India Company, could not clear the government dues, which were estimated as Rs. 80,367.[226] The English officials were not happy with him and he was deprived of his *malikana* rights over a few villages as punishment. The *raja* appealed to the Revenue Council at Patna for the restoration of his rights but the appeal was re-jected.[227]

However, the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* praises Raja Bikramjit as a man of foresight and vision who called twelve other subordinate Ujjainia chiefs to a meeting at Dumraon and appealed to them for unity among the Ujjainia kin. At the meeting, the chiefs promised to 'sink or swim' together. It was the first attempt made by an Ujjainia chief to bring about brotherhood and unity amongst the clan in the history of Shahabad.[228]

In 1781, Raja Chait Singh of Varanasi rebelled against the British East India Company. He was upset with the local British officials who

were making extortions from his territory and treasury. The Shahabad region was also affected as it was neighbouring and it was said that a large portion of the Bhojpur chieftaincy had been included in the dominion of the *raja* of Varanasi.[229] The *raja* captured some of the territories to the north-west of the district of Shahabad. He wanted to consolidate his position, and establish strong and strategic bases to the south of the river Ganges. Therefore, he annexed the *pargana* of Mangror and the fort of Seringah, 6 km south of Chausa, after expelling the Ujjainia *zamindars*.[230] This development naturally angered the Ujjainia chiefs of Shahabad. They were waiting for an opportunity to strike against him and recover their territories which had been under his control. Some of the important Bhojpur *zamindars* such as the chiefs of Dumraon and Jagdishpur joined the British East India Company's army, which was sent to suppress the rebellion.[231] Some other Ujjainia chiefs, who were not happy with the British, joined the *raja* of Varanasi.[232]

The British East India Company fought a battle against Raja Chait Singh on 20 September 1781. In this battle, the Ujjainia chiefs, Raja Bikramjit Singh of Dumraon and Raja Bhupnarain Singh of Jagdishpur, provided valuable support to the Company.[233] Bikramjit Singh had sent one of his brothers with 500 match-lockmen to assist Major Crawford and another with 100 men to Major Eatone at Buxar. Raja Bikramjit along with Bhupnarain of Jagdishpur, joined Major Crawford. The combined forces of the British and the Ujjainias marched to Vijayagarh in the district of Mirzapur and inflicted a crushing defeat on Chait Singh. Governor-General Warren Hastings was very happy with the timely support of the Ujjainia chiefs. As a reward, he granted a hereditary pension of Rs. 4,000 per annum to Bikramjit Singh of Dumraon. He gave some other rewards to the chief of Jagdishpur.[234]

However, Raja Bikramjit Singh could not remain in the good books of the Company for long. W.A. Brooke, the revenue chief at Patna blamed him for oppressing the people of *parganas* of Bhojpur Danwar Dinara, and the *taluka* of Bihea, as these regions were depopulated and deserted.[235] During 1783–4, these villages were assigned to Ahmad Ali Khan but he could not manage the *zamindari* satisfactorily. Bikramjit Singh, thereupon, requested the Board of Revenue in 1785 to restore his confiscated villages to him. The Board was pleased to restore his *zamindari* and another settlement was done with him by the revenue chief at Patna.[236] But Bikramjit Singh could not fulfil the revenue demand of the Company and was put behind bars.[237] He made a request to the Company that as he was borrowing Rs. 60,000 from a moneylender to meet the obligations of the Company, he should be released and his *zamindari* restored to him. However, his request was

not heard due to the opposition of the Collector of Shahabad who insisted that the Raja clear all his dues before he was reinstated.[238] Bikramjit Singh, however, kept appealing to the Company. His debt was Rs. 5,24,204, which was his *jama* (estimated revenue) of the period 1786–7. After some time, the Company agreed to remit Rs. 82,056, which his peasants owed to him. It also agreed to grant him some allowance (to fulfil his needs or personal expenses), pending the final settle-ment.[239] At the instigation of the Collector of Shahabad, Raja Bikramjit was asked to furnish security as proof of his intention to clear his arrears.[240] The *raja* accepted this.[241] The Collector was afraid that if he was given back the *zamindari* of Dumraon without any conditions, he might evade the payment of his debt.

The latter Bikramjit produced some *mahajans* who stood for his security and he was restored to his *zamindari* on the condition that he had to clear his dues within a year by monthly instalments. Yet during 1790–1, he was again removed from his *zamindari* by the Company. It was alleged that he had collected the *sayer* duties, which was prohibited by the orders of the Company.[242] Although the *raja* pleaded his innocence and admitted that the *amils* might have collected the duties without his knowledge, this was of no help.[243] However, it appears that the *zamindari* was restored to him during 1796–7.[244]

The Permanent Settlement was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. More than half the area of the old *sarkar* of Shahabad was distributed among three chiefs of the Ujjainia family: Raja Bikramjit Singh and his kinsmen of Dumraon, Bhupnarain Singh of Jagdish-pur and Bhagwat Singh of Buxar, respectively. In the Sasaram *pargana*, the claims of the descendants of Pahalwan Singh, Sri Jagannath Singh and Sannaut Singh were recognized by the Patna Council, and they were admitted to the settlements of the villages in which their *zamindari* rights had been acknowleged. The rest of the *pargana* was settled with the petty collectors of rent in villages, the *muqaddams* or *chaudharies*.

Raja Bikramjit Singh died at Varanasi on 28 June 1805 without any heir, although he had adopted Jai Prakash, the eldest son of his younger brother. He had made Jai Prakash his successor through a *tamliknamah* dated 16 April 1803. It states, 'Babu Jai Prakash Singh, my adopted son (*pesre khandan*) whom I have adopted as my son from his childhood and have made him my representative and have assigned the right to possess and enjoy my property. I have granted him *malikana* right over all the lands, villages and properties mentioned above.'[245] Some lacunae were found in the document of adoption of this Dumraon Raj family.[246] At the same time, the widow of Raja Bikramjit was displeased with Jai Prakash because he had not attended the funeral of his adoptive father in Varanasi. It also appears that the coronation of Jai Prakash was delayed for a few months

because some close family members of the deceased *raja* had objected to his accession.[247]

The condition of Bhojpur was extremely deplorable on account of the maladministration of the previous regime. The land revenue of the estate had been auctioned to bidders, which had led to the exploitation of the peasants.[248] It appears that these oppressions compelled them to abandon their villages. When W.A. Brooke visited Ara in 1782, he found many villages deserted due to the oppressions of Raja Bikramjit Singh of Dumraon and his cousin, Bhupnarain Singh of Jagdishpur. However, Raja Jai Prakash Singh was able to improve the financial condition of his estate. He cleared much of the debt of the chieftaincy and played a prominent role for the British during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–16). This Ujjainia Chief of Dumraon had sent a strong force of 500 horsemen to fight for the British under the command of General Orchterlony. This was appreciated by the Governor-General, Marquis of Hastings, who conferred the title of 'Maharaja Bahadur' on Jai Prakash Singh and his descendants.[249]

Raja Jai Prakash was a benevolent person. It is said that he bore the expenses of the students who studied under the guidance of his family priest. Under his supervision, 200 poor people were served food from the royal kitchen daily. He also provided financial support to widows and other needy women.[250] Yet he was criticized for his attitude of neglect towards the interests of ryots (peasants).[251]

Raja Jai Prakash remained the chief of Dumraon for over three decades. He died in Varanasi in October 1838.[252] He had two sons, Lal Biseshwar Bux Singh and Lal Maheshwar Bux Singh. As the older, Lal Biseshwar Bux Singh, had died during the lifetime of his father, his son Janaki Prasad Singh, succeeded to the throne.[253] As Janaki Prasad Singh was a minor of thirteen years when he sat on the throne, his uncle, Maheshwar Bux Singh, was appointed as his guardian. He looked after the administration of the chieftaincy on behalf of his nephew.[254] Raja Janaki Prasad Singh could not survive for long and died in May 1843 at the age of eighteen.[255] During his rule, he had been a tool in the hands of his uncle, Maheshwar Bux Singh, the de facto ruler of Dumraon.

Soon after the death of Raja Janaki Prasad, the Ujjainia chieftaincy went through a war of succession for a while. Raja Janaki Prasad, along with his guardian uncle, Maheshwar Bux Singh, had earlier left for a pilgrimage to Jagannath Puri. The administrative charge of the chieftaincy had been given to Lal Rameshwar Bux Singh, son of Sheo Prasad Singh, a cousin of the late Raja Jai Prakash. Raja Janaki Prasad died on his way at Medinapur. As soon as Lal Rameshwar Bux Singh came to know about his sudden demise, he tried to capture the treasury and other valuables of the late *raja*. However, he could not

succeed in his mission as he was opposed by the *diwan*, Ram Nath Singh and some other loyal members of the Raja Janaki Prasad. Ram Nath Singh refused to recognize anybody as the rightful owner of the estate until the final decision was made in this regard by the royal widow and the district officer of Shahabad. Lal Rameshwar Bux Singh's failed and he moved the district court at Ara for his claims over the Dumraon Raj.

Maheshwar Bux Singh returned with the party that had gone to Jagannath Puri. People supported him and showed confidence in his ability to succeed to the throne. A joint petition was drawn up, which was signed by the widows of Jai Prakash and Janaki Prasad Singh, and a few other Ujjainia nobles including Sheo Prasad, the father of the rival claimant, Lal Rameshwar Bux Singh. In the petition, a request was made to the district officer of Shahabad to recognize Maheshwar Bux Singh as the ruler of the Dumraon estate. This petition was presented to the local authorities at Ara and a copy was sent to the British officer at Patna and another to the Governor-General at Calcutta.[256] As a result, Maheshwar Bux Singh was recognized as the *raja* of the Dumraon chieftaincy and he sat on the throne on 29 June 1843. He ruled the chieftaincy for over four decades. It was during his rule that the rebellion of 1857 against the British government took place. Kunwar Singh, the Ujjainia chief of Jagdishpur, rebelled against the British. However, Maheshwar Bux Singh was a far-sighted ruler who was more focused on the interests of his chieftaincy and its people, and, therefore, did not join the revolt. During his regime, the chieftaincy's territory was expanded and he became one of the prominent *zamindars* of the Bihar *suba*. The *raja* died in 1881 and was succeeded by his son Raja Radha Prasad Singh.[257]

The Bhojpur chieftaincy remained one of the powerful chieftaincies of Bihar from its establishment. It was the only officially recognized principality by the Mughals, and the Ujjainia chiefs used to shift their capital from one place to another in the Bhojpur region according to political expediency or sentimental attachment. The chief enjoyed a *mansab* of 1,000 *zat* and *sawar* and was conferred the title of *raja* through an imperial *farman*. The other Ujjainia *zamindars* occupied subordinate position and did not possess any recognized status. After the succession of Horil Singh to the Bhojpur throne in 1708, the chieftaincy was divided into three independent parts: Mathla under Horil Singh, Jagdishpur under Jaswant Singh and Buxar under Bodh Singh (Udwant Singh and Bodh Singh were the sons of Sujan Singh who was the cousin of Mandhata Singh and father of Horil Singh).

Udwant Singh was the founder of the Jagdishpur branch of the Ujjainia chieftaincy. He was a powerful chief who rebelled against the

Mughal authority and never submitted to the *nazim* of the Bihar *suba*.[258] It appears that Bihar was disturbed and a chaotic condition had prevailed there during the second quarter of the eighteenth century.[259] In 1740, Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar, became the nawab of Bengal and appointed his nephew and son-in-law, Jainuddin Haibat Jung, as his deputy in Bihar (1740–8). Haibat Jung managed the administration of the Bihar *suba* effectively. Refractory individuals like Sunder Singh of Tikari, the Mayi chiefs, Kamghar Khan, Namdar Khan of Hisua and several others submitted to him. Raja Horil Singh of Dumraon and Udwant Singh of Jagdishpur were still at large. On their refusal to pay the arrears of land revenue, Haibat Jung led an expedition against them. They were forced to submit to him. In one of his expeditions, Haibat Jung killed Roshan Khan Turki, a valiant Pathan general and the *faujdar* of Shahabad, on the suspicion of his being in league with the rebel Ujjainias. The Afghans, angered by this killing, distanced themselves from Haibat Jung. Under the leadership of Mustafa Khan, they rebelled against the *nazim* of Bihar. Mustafa Khan was joined by Udwant Singh of Jagdishpur and they also sought the help of the Marathas. The Marathas also made several raids into Bihar during this period. Haibat Jung, however, boldly faced the allied rebel forces. He gave a crushing defeat to the Afghans. Mustafa Khan was killed near Jagdishpur and the palace of Jagdish-pur was besieged by the nawab's forces.[260] According to the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, Udwant Singh was a great warrior and efficient administrator, and Jagdishpur prospered under his chieftainship.[261] He gave patronage to Mauli Kavi who wrote a book, *Udwant Prakash* in 1747. It is a history of the Ujjainia family of Jagdishpur in verse. Udwant Singh was succeeded by his eldest son, Gajraj Singh, in 1765 but his position was challenged by Gajraj's brother Umrao Singh, the grandfather of Kunwar Singh. Umrao Singh wanted a division of the Jagdishpur chieftaincy and claimed a major share for himself, which was refused by Gajraj Singh. Gajraj Singh died in 1773 and was succeeded by his son, Shivraj Singh (also known as Lal Singh), who died after four years in 1779. He was succeeded, in turn, by Bhup Narayan.[262] Umrao Singh got possession of Dalippur, along with some income from the forest of Jagdishpur, through a court decree but this was confiscated by Bhup Narayan after his death.[263] Bhup Narayan also dispossessed Shahebzada Singh, the son of Umrao Singh, of his property in Dalippur. This was resented by Umrao Singh and he left Jagdishpur in a huff, leaving his two sons, Kunwar Singh and Dayal Singh, with Umrao Sahu, a moneylender of Dalippur. He decided not to come back to Jagdishpur during the lifetime of Bhup Narayan.[264]

Bhup Narayan died on 10 February 1794. He had no son but had

adopted Ishwar Singh, the grandson of Run Singh who was the third son of Udwant Singh, and had nominated him as his successor. This was challenged by Shahebzada Singh who appealed to the court at Ara that the adoption had not been made according to the Hindu law, tradition or custom.[265] The British could not understand the Hindu law and tradition and temporarily, accepted the claim of Ishwar Singh to the throne of Jagdishpur. As he was a minor, the Jagdishpur chieftaincy was taken over by the courts of wards and remained under their control for nearly five years.[266]

After some time, the chieftaincy of Jagdishpur was given to Ishwar Singh, the adopted son of Raja Bhup Narayan and his wife, Rani Talmand Kunwar, but he could not manage the chieftaincy properly. The affairs of the *zamindari* were out of his control. Even the allowance which was granted to the widow of Bhup Narayan was defaulted upon. She was displeased with the management of the chieftaincy under Ishwar Singh, and unhappy and angry with him because she had adopted Ishwar Singh as her son on behalf of her husband. This development at the Jagdishpur court proved a boon to Shahebzada Singh. He requested Talmand Kunwar to save Jagdishpur and tried to convince her that she alone could save the chieftaincy from ruin.[267]

As a result, the Rani decided to report to the court that the adoption of Ishwar Singh had not been according to Hindu laws and tradition. She requested the court to declare the adoption of Ishwar Singh null and void. A judgement was given in favour of Shahebzada Singh and he succeeded to the throne.[268] However Ishwar Singh was granted several villages for his maintenance. Shahebzada Singh was grateful to the *rani* and she was granted five villages with an annual income of Rs. 6,000 for her maintenance.[269]

Shahebzada Singh was a kind person, and due to his effective and good administration, he became popular among the ryots. Buchanan, who visited Jagdishpur when Shahebzada Singh was the chief, informs us that the latter was sixty-five years old but physically strong. When the writer was at Jagdishpur, Shahebzada Singh had hurt himself and could not be interviewed. Buchanan also notes that his eldest son, Kunwar Singh was a great man. He further writes that Shahebzada Singh was deeply involved in debt and that the family seemed to be on the verge of ruin. The *raja's* four sons had begun to quarrel for the succession. *Raja* himself had an estimated income of Rs. 3,00,000 for which he paid an interest rate of Rs. 60,000 a year.[270]

Buchanan has also given a list of the staff who was working at the Jagdishpur court. These include the *diwan*, a *khazanchi* (treasurer), five clerks (*mutasaddis*), two *tahsildars* or (assistant *diwans*), one councillor, five *jumladars* (other officials), one hundred and twenty-

five *piyadahs* (guards) and one agent at Ara, one at Patna and a third at Calcutta. In addition, there were one elephant, ten horses, eight carriages drawn by oxen, and a large number of hawks and dogs.[271]

Shahebzada Singh had four sons, Kunwar Singh, Dayal Singh, Rajpati Singh and Amar Singh. Kunwar Singh was interested in hunting and, therefore, built a house in the forest of the village of Jitaura. He and Dayal Singh were both married to the daughters of Raja Fateh Narayan Singh of the Deo-Munga estate in the Aurangabad district. Dayal Singh, like Kunwar Singh, was a skilled warrior, a good rider, a fine swordsman and a distinguished marksman but was engaged in the management of the family estate.[272] The third son, Rajpati Singh, developed insanitary at an early age. The youngest, Amar Singh, was also a brave man and hunting was his chief hobby.

Relations between Shahebzada Singh and Kunwar Singh were not cordial. There was an understanding between father and his four sons that the entire property was to remain under the control of Shahebzada Singh and after his death, it would be divided among them and they would pay the government revenue, respectively.[273] Though Kunwar Singh accepted this, he complained to the district officers at Ara that his father had attempted to execute fictitious sale-deeds of certain villages in favour of his younger brothers. He now became a regular visitor to the court at Ara against the actions of his father.[274]

Shahebzada Singh died in July 1826 and was succeeded by Kunwar Singh. After his accession to the throne of Jagdishpur, he proceeded to possess the entire property registered in his name and also asked his younger brothers to pay the revenue of their shared properties through him, not directly to the government treasury. This was opposed by his younger brother, Dayal Singh, at the court in Ara.[275] After the death of his father, Dayal Singh, along with his mother, Panchratan Kunwar, and younger brothers, Rajpati Singh and Amar Singh, left Jagdishpur and made Dalippur his permanent residence.[276] He died before the rebellion of 1857.[277]

The conflict between the older and younger brother had led to prolonged appeals and counter-appeals. With the succession of Kunwar Singh to the throne of Jagdishpur, though, peace and prosperity returned to the chieftaincy. The Jagdishpur town was expanded and beautified, new markets were created and many other developments took place in the region. Kunwar Singh developed the ‘Mahadev Bazar’ in Ara which is presently known as the ‘Babu Bazar’.[278] He also encouraged afforestation, and new plants were sown in and around Jagdishpur. Kunwar Singh also renovated and strengthened the fort of Jagdishpur. He constructed two tanks to the west and east of the fort. A garden was also created, which had a big

hauz (water tank or lake) with fountains in the middle.[279]

Kunwar Singh had developed very good relations with the British. But during the rebellion of 1857, he rebelled against them. In Bihar, the three Native Infantry Regiments (the 7th, 8th, and 40th Regiments) revolted at Danapur on 25 July 1857.[280] These were sepoys trained under the British who needed an able leader to give them the right direction. As Kunwar Singh was now a rebel against the British, he decided to lead the sepoys' regiments against them. It seems that he was not happy with the British Revenue Board who had imposed a huge amount of financial obligation on him that was unable to clear. According to the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, Kunwar Singh joined the camp of the rebels because the rebel sepoys from Danapur came to Ara and pressurized him to join them. Under the leadership of Harkishan Singh and Nishan Singh, they looted the property of some of the rich merchants at Jagdishpur. Then they openly told Kunwar Singh that if he did not join them in their struggle against the British government, they would destroy the Jagdishpur chieftaincy. Kunwar Singh called a meeting of high officials and sought the advice of the people. Ultimately, it was decided that he would join the rebels.[281] Information on this rebellion had reached the British officers at Ara. The rebels crossed the Sone River on 26 July[282] and this was reported to the British residence at Ara. All the British officials decided to take shelter in the fortified house constructed by Boyle, which was guarded by a Sikh contingent and a few English soldiers.[283]

On 27 July, the rebel sepoys reached Ara and first attacked the district jail and liberated the prisoners. Then they rushed to the Collectorate where they were joined by a detachment of the Bihar Station Guards. The rebel soldiers plundered the government treasury of the Ara Collectorate of cash to the tune of around Rs. 85,000.[284] The next target was Boyle's fortified residence where all the British officials had taken shelter. The rebel sepoys were resisted by the Sikh guards.[285] Yet they were able to capture the outposts of the house.[286]

In the meantime, the rebel native soldiers were joined by Kunwar Singh who came from Jagdishpur with a large Ujjainia force. His joining the rebels not only strengthened the latter's cause but also threw a challenge to the British authorities in Bihar. Kunwar Singh gathered around four thousand men in the beginning but the number rose to ten thousand later on. He had stored resources for six months for his army of twenty thousand at Jagdishpur. He also arranged for the manufacture of arms and ammunition. The rule of the British East India Company was insecure in Bihar. The siege of the Boyle's fortified house, which was guarded by an inadequate garrison, caused much concern and anxiety at Patna and Danapur. A rescue contingent of Sikh and European soldiers numbering 500 was immediately

dispatched from Danapur under the command of Captain Dunbar but this small contingent was ineffective in checking the rebel sepoys. Captain Dunbar and several British officers were shot dead. This was reported to the commander-in-chief by Major-General Loyd on 30 July 1857. The British now realized that the threat of rebellion was a major one and that they should take some strong action.

Kunwar Singh, the Ujjainia chief, was supported by other important people, such as Ranadalan Singh, Jai Krishna Singh, Jahan Singh, Thakur Dayal Singh and Bisheshwar Singh. His principal lieutenants were his youngest brother, Amar Singh, his nephew, Ritbhanjan Singh, and his *tahsildars*, Hare Krishna Singh, Nishan Singh, Ali Karim, Dilawar Khan and Sarnam Singh.[287] After the success of the rebel sepoys against Captain Dunbar, the Bhojpur chieftaincy came under the control of Kunwar Singh. The Ujjainia chief made arrangements for carrying on the administration in the occupied territory. Hare Krishna Singh was made the head of Bhojpur. Two police stations were established at Ara one was known as the eastern *thana* and the other as the western *thana*. Both were placed under the control of Shaikh Ghulam Yahea who was appointed as the magistrate. Turab Ali and Khadim Ali were given the charge of the *kotwals* of the eastern and western *thanas*, respect-ively.[288]

The rebel sepoys under Kunwar Singh tried to capture the Ara House where the European residents of Ara had taken shelter and then tried to win over the Sikh soldiers. They failed in both attempts. In the meantime, Major Vincent Eyer with a large group of soldiers and three guns came from Buxar to Ara and made a counterattack on the rebels. Kunwar Singh's forces were badly defeated by Major Vincent Eyer, and were forced to raise the siege and disperse. Kunwar Singh went with his followers to Jagdishpur where he had stored grains and arms. Major Vincent Eyer took immediate action to establish order in and around Ara. The people of the Ara town were disarmed. Some of the captured rebel officers were tried by court-martial and publicly hanged. This was done to strike terror into the hearts of the people of the town.[289] It should be noted here that at the beginning of the rebellion when Ara had come under the temporary control of Kunwar Singh, he had spared the lives of many European people.[290]

After reconquering the town of Ara, Major Eyer pursued Kunwar Singh to Jagdishpur and captured it on 12 August 1857 without much difficulty. He destroyed the munitions of war and several buildings, which included a temple. The British forces also destroyed the house of Kunwar Singh at Jitaura on 14 August, and burnt the house of Amar Singh and Dayal Singh, his younger brothers.[291]

After the capture of Jagdishpur by the British forces, Kunwar Singh secretly fled to Jitaura. He then went to Rohtas when he came to

know that the British forces were pursuing him. In the month of August, his property was confiscated by the magistrate of Shahabad by the order of the commissioner of Patna.[292] Kunwar Singh decided to leave Bihar and reached Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh on 26 August 1857. He had a small contingent of loyal soldiers with him. He remained in the town for several days and tried to collect revenue from the area with the help of the *qanungo*. Then he proceeded to Rewah whose chief was his relative. However, the latter requested him not to enter his territory as was afraid of retaliation by the British officers if he allowed Kunwar Singh to enter his dominion. Kunwar Singh, though, did not listen to the request of the ruler and entered the city. He was welcomed by the nobles but the *raja* of Rewah left the capital with his family and went elsewhere. Kunwar Singh faced stiff resistance from Colonel Hinde, the commander of the Rewah regiment.[293] The British forces proved themselves superior to Kunwar Singh and after his defeat; he went to Banda where he was interested in joining Tantia Tope (a loyal servant of Nana Sahib of Kanpur). He was welcomed by the nawab of Banda and given warm hospitality. From Banda, Kunwar Singh went to Kalpi with his band of soldiers where the Gwalior troops joined him on 7 November 1857. In December, Kunwar Singh, Nana Saheb (the adopted son of Baji Rao II, the last Peshwa of Kanpur) and the Gwalior contingent fought the British forces at the battle of Kanpur but were defeated. Kunwar Singh went to Lucknow where he was warmly received by the nawab of Awadh who presented him with a robe of honour, some money and a *farman* granting him the district of Azamgarh.[294]

Kunwar Singh later went to Atrauli about 35 km from Azamgarh where he clashed with the British forces on 17 March 1858. On 22 March, he was attacked by the British forces under Colonel Milman but they were badly defeated by him. The British forces retreated, leaving behind huge quantities of ammunitions and baggage. After this victory, Kunwar Singh established his control over Azamgarh. He also repulsed the attack of Colonel Dames five days later.[295]

The defeat of the British forces under the commands of Colonel Milman and Dames by Kunwar Singh affected the prestige of the British East India Company in India. This was reported to the Governor-General of India, Lord Canning, who deputed a reputed British general, Lord Mark Kerr, with a strong contingent to crush the rebellion of Kunwar Singh. Lord Kerr, who was posted at Allahabad as the commander of the Right Wing of the 13th Light Cavalry, came to Azamgarh immediately after the receipt of the order of the Governor-General. He reached there on 6 April 1858 and achieved some success over Kunwar Singh's troops, while awaiting the arrival of Sir E. Lugard who was to join him with a large force. As a strategic move,

Kunwar Singh started for Ghazipur on 13 April 1858 but changed his mind later on and returned to Azamgarh. On 15 April 1858, Sir Lugard reached Azamgarh with a large army. An intense clash took place between the two forces in which Kunwar Singh was defeated.[296] After this defeat, the Ujjainia chief decided to return to Jagdishpur. While he was on his way, Sir Lugard deputed Brigadier Douglas to pursue and capture him. Further, the Company issued a proclamation to the district officials that a sum of Rs. 25,000 would be paid to the person who would capture and bring Kunwar Singh to them, either alive or dead.[297]

The news of Kunwar Singh's return to Jagdishpur was perceived by the British officers at Shahabad and Patna as an act that would boost the morale of the rebels of Shahabad, in particular, and Bihar, in general. The rebels might rise in rebellion again and disturb the political atmosphere of the district.[298] Brigadier Douglas tried his best to capture the Ujjainia chief but failed. Incidentlly, he had praised the bravery and strategy of Kunwar Singh.[299] All steps and precautions were taken by the British officials to restrict his arrival in Jagdishpur. The villagers of the Shahabad district were warned not to give any assistance or cooperation to the rebel chief and anybody found doing so would be severely punished.[300]

Hotly pursued by Brigadier Douglas and Colonel Cumberlege, Kunwar Singh reached Mania in the district of Ghazipur on the night of 20 April 1858. There, a large number of people joined his party and the villagers helped him wherever he moved.[301] With this help Kunwar Singh collected a large number of boats. The *zamindars* of Sheopur extended a hearty welcome to the hero of Shahabad and gave him fifteen to twenty boats.[302] Kunwar Singh tried to cross the Ganges on the night of 21 April 1858 at Sheopur *ghat* which was 10 miles from the city of Balia. While he was in the middle of the river, the British forces reached the riverbank and threw a cannon ball at him which hit his right wrist. The wrist was badly injured. It is rumoured that in order to prevent the poison from spreading in his body, he cut the affected wrist with his sword and threw it into the river.[303] Kunwar Singh managed to reach to his capital, Jagdishpur on 22 April 1858. He was joined by his younger brother, Amar Singh, with several thousands of armed villagers.[304]

The arrival of Raja Kunwar Singh at Jagdishpur alarmed the British authorities of Patna and Ara. They decided to attack him. A fierce battle was fought between the British forces and the wounded Kunwar Singh in which the former were crushed by the Ujjainia forces on 23 April 1858 and suffered heavy losses. After this victory, Kunwar Singh survived for only three days. He died on 26 April 1858, a martyr's death.[305]

Kunwar Singh was one of the greatest chiefs of Jagdishpur. He played an important role in bringing prosperity and welfare to the people of Ujjainia who loved him very much. He was a brave and courageous person and, therefore, even the British officials praised him. E.A. Samuells, the Commissioner of the Patna division, remarked, 'Koer Singh was a man with much chivalry.'[306] This kind hearted *zamindar* loved his peasants so much that he gave financial assistance to the needy ones at the time of their daughters' marriage or in case of any serious illness. He remitted or reduced the taxes paid by the peasants during natural calamities. He also gave patronage to arts and crafts, established an elementary school at Jagdishpur where no fees were charged from the children, and donated land for the construction of the Ara Zila School, which was established in 1846.[307]

After the death of Kunwar Singh, the charge of the rebel sepoys passed on to his youngest brother, Amar Singh, who was ably assisted by his older brother's lieutenants such as Nishan Singh, Hare Krishna Singh, Ritbhajan Singh and many others. Sir E. Lugard went from Azamgarh to Ara and Bihea, and sent a cavalry contingent against Amar Singh. A battle was fought between the two near Jagdishpur on 9 May 1858 in which Amar Singh's forces were defeated. Two more battles were fought at Dalippur and Jitaura, and the Company's forces were victorious on account of their superior military strength. Thus Jagdishpur, Dalippur and Jitaura were lost to Amar Singh. However, this did not dishearten him and he adopted guerrilla warfare methods to harass the British forces by cutting their supplies.[308]

Soon after, Nishan Singh, one of the associates of Kunwar Singh, was caught by the British when he was ill and thereby fell into their hands. He was tried by court martial and found guilty. The court ordered that he be given the death punishment. On 7 June 1858, he was shot dead at Sasaram.[309] Hare Krishna Singh was also captured at Varanasi and publicly hanged at Jagdishpur in 1859.[310] Amar Singh continued his struggle against the British forces till October 1859. After the defeat of Nana Saheb who was in Nepal, Amar Singh proceeded to the Tarain region in October 1859 to assume command of Nana's troops. However, he was defeated and captured by the forces of the *maharaja* of Nepal in December 1859. He was imprisoned in the Gorakhpur jail for trial where he died of dysentery on 5 February 1860.[311]

NOTES

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, p. 71.
2. Munshi Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, Lucknow, Newal Kishor Press, 1898, vol. II, pp. 35, 54, 55 (Urdu text).
3. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, pp. 186–9.
4. *Census of India, 1951*, *District Census Hand Book, Shahabad, Government of Bihar*, Patna, Patna Government Press, 1954, p. 176.
5. P.C. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, Patna, Government Press, 1966, p. 1798.
6. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal: Gaya and Shahabad*, London, Trübner & Co., 1877, vol. XII, p. 157.
7. Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 1798.
8. R.N. Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, Patna, KPJRI, 1987, p. 7.
9. The migration of the Parmars of Bhojpur was part of the natural process of the general migration of Rajputs to different places as a result of Turkish military pressure and the establishment of their rule in the mid-Gangetic doab (ibid.).
10. The establishment of the Ujjainia ascendancy over Bhojpur has been given by R.N. Prasad. See ibid., pp. 7–17.
11. Bodhraj, *Bhojpur mein Paramaron ka Itihas 1577 tak*, Bodhraj belonged to Pugal in Bikaner (Rajasthan). He wrote the history of the Parmar Rajputs and visited Jagdishpur (Bhojpur) in 1663 for the collection of material and stayed there for six months. This Hindi document is available in the Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna. It is an important original historical record which gives the account of the Ujjainias of Bhojpur, tracing their descendant directly to the famous Raja Bhoj of Dhar in Malwa. It ends abruptly after giving an account till 1577. Also see B.P. Ambashthya, 'The Accounts of the Ujjainias in Bihar', *JBRS*, January-December 1961, vol. XLVII, pts. I to IV, p. 423.
12. Bodhraj, *Bhojpur mein Paramaron ka Itihas 1577 tak*, also, see B.P. Ambashthya, 'The Accounts of Ujjainias of Bihar', p. 423. However, Munshi Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, Lucknow, Newal Kishor Press, 1898, vol. II, is a history of the Ujjainia Raj in Urdu. It records that Raja Dulha Sahi (Dulha was probably a corruption of Durlabh) had two sons from his first wife and they were Badal Sahi and Ram Sahi. The *raja* (Dulha Sahi) had three sons from second wife, and they were Sangram Sahi, Devendra Sahi and Dilip Sahi. Raja Durlabh Deo

or Dulha Sahi had no third wife. As Badal was blind, his younger brother, Ram Sahi, ascended the throne after the death of his father, Raja Dulha Sahi. The account of *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, is however, not reliable as its author, namely Vinayak Prasad, who was an employee of Maharaja Radha Prasad Singh towards the end of the nineteenth century, had little sense of history. Yet some information from *Tawarikh* is valuable to fill the gaps in the history of the Ujjainias.

13. Bodhraj, *Bhojpur mein Paramaron ka Itihas 1577 tak*.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. B.P. Ambashthya, *The Decisive Battles of Sher Shah*, Patna, Janaki Prakashan Chowhatta, 1977, p. 22.

20. Arail was a pargana in the *suba* of Allahabad.

21. Bodhraj, *Bhojpur mein Paramaron ka Itihas 1577 tak*.

22. Ibid.

23. Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkirat-ul Waqiat* (Rotograph in the Library, CAS, Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh), p. 25. Gulbadan Begum's account also corroborates Jauhar's narration.

24. Ambashthya, *The Decisive Battles of Sher Shah*, p. 23.

25. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 15.

26. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p.168

27. Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ul Tawarikh*, ed. Ali Ahmad & Lees, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1864–9, pp. 179–80. Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ed. Brajendranath De, Calcutta, The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1936, vol. II, p. 313.

28. Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkira-i-Humayun-o-Akbar*, ed. Hidayat Hosain, Calcutta, ASB, 1941, p. 319.

29. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *A Political Biography of a Mughal Noble, Munim Khan (1497–1575)*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1973, p. 109.

30. Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkira-i-Humayun-o-Akbar*, p. 321.

31. Ibid., pp. 326–7.

32. Ibid.
33. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 98.
34. B.P. Ambashthya, 'The Accounts of Safdar Ali, the Mir Munsi of Todar Mal and Ram Das Kachchawahas by Kanha Bard of Kachchawahas of the village Achalpurah in Jaipur State', *JBRS*, vol. XLIV, pts. I & II, March–June 1958, p. 68, This article gives the genealogical table of the Ujjainia chiefs and their descendants which mentions that Kunwar Rampat Ujjainia is also known by two names Ram Singh and Sri Ram, the son of Raja Gajpati.
35. Ambashthya, 'The Accounts of Safdar Ali, the Mir Munsi of Todar Mal and Ram Das Kachchawahas by Kanha Bard of Kachchawahas of the village Achalpurah in Jaipur State', p. 68.
36. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p.121. Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, vol. II, p. 304. Badauni, *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh*, vol. II, p. 193.
37. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 160.
38. Ibid., pp. 179–81.
39. Abul Fazl writes that 'Due to his inverted fate and evil nature… this ill conditioned mischief monger took to the highway robberies and began to oppress the weak more than before' (ibid., p. 169).
40. Nizamuddin Ahmad says that Gajpati rebelled when Muzaffar Khan went with reinforcements to Khan-i-Jahan 'leaving Bihar void of troops' (Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, tr. Brajendranath De, vol. II, p. 334).
41. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 169.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., pp. 169–70.
44. The Survey map shows Moheda about 7 miles west of Bhojpur.
45. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, pp. 185–6.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., pp. 263–7.
49. Ibid.
50. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 17.
51. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 323.
52.

Ibid.

53. Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, tr., B. De, p. 347.

54. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 323.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., p. 323.

57. An important place 9 miles away from the Sone River, then a dependency of Rohtas in Bihar but now in the Mirzapur district of U.P.

58. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 324

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., p. 325.

61. Ibid., p. 750.

62. Ibid., p. 323.

63. Ibid., p. 826.

64. Ibid., 758.

65. Ibid., 578.

66. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 26.

67. The genealogical table of the Ujjainia chiefs has been given in the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*.

68. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 21. However, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* informs us that Raja Narayan Mal was the son of Raja Bhatmal Bishan (Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M. Islam Borah, Guwahati, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1992, p. 722).

69. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 21–8.

70. Ibid.

71. After their expulsion from west Bihar, the Cheros often rose in rebellion to give vent to their anger and also recover their territories but their revolts were always suppressed.

72. The successors of Gajpati who considered themselves as lawful heirs were looking for an opportunity to rise in rebellion against the Bhojpur chief. Another claimant to the throne, Sangram Singh Ujjainia, the son of Bairi Sal, also contemplated rebellion (Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, Patna, Bihar Government Press, 1966, p. 72).

73.

Kaddhar is a village in the district of Nawada in Bihar.

74. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 28–9.

75. Kalyan Singh was the founder of the Kayastha family of Murar in the district of Bhojpur. He was the son of Bhog Chandra, the Diwan-i-Khalsa of Akbar's time.

76. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 28–9.

77. Ibid., pp. 28–31.

78. Ibid., p. 34.

79. He was an Ujjainia rebel and a descendant of Raja Durlabh Rai.

80. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M.I. Borah, Guwahati, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1992, vol. I, pp. 89–91.

81. According to the genealogical table given by Bodhraj of Pugal, Raja Madhukar was the son of Mukutmani, son of Raja Dalpat Ujjainia.

82. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. I, pp. 89–91. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur & Aligarh, Private Press, 1863–4, pp. 83–4. Mutamid Khan, *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Abdal-Haiyi and Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1865, vol. III, pp. 45–7. Kamgar Husaini, *Maasir-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Azra Alavi, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1978, pp. 129–31. Only *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* mentions the name as Raja Madhukar (Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. I, pp. 89–91).

83. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. II, p. 722. However, Munsi Vinayak Prasad informs us that Raja Narayan Mal became victim of the internal dissension and was killed by one of his kinsmen in 1621.

84. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 35. All regions except Chainpur are given as *parganas* of Rohtas in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, pp. 22–3. Kopa in Saran, Gadh and Mahmoodabad were not identified (Ahmad R. Khan, 'Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582–1707)', unpublished thesis, Aligarh, Aligarh Muslim University, 1985, p. 176).

85. Narayan Mal had two sons, Amar Singh and Prabal Singh (Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 55).

86. Ibid., pp. 43–4.

87. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, ed. Kabir al-Din Ahmad, Abd al Rahim and W. N. Lees, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1866–72, vol. I, pts. II, p. 221. Muhammad Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, ed. G. Yazdani, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1912–46, vol. III, p. 462.

88. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, Patna, KPJRI, 1987, p. 57.

89. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 44.

90.

Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 272–3. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahanama*, tr. A.R. Fuller, ed. W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 209–10.

91. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 272–3. Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul Lubab*, ed. Kabir al Din Ahmad, Calcutta, ASB, 1869, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 544–5.

92. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 274. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahanama*, tr. A.R. Fuller, W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai, p. 210.

93. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 274. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahannama*, p. 211.

94. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 60.

95. Mithila is a village 20 km south-west of Dumraon in the Buxar subdivision of Bhojpur.

96. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 57–9.

97. B.P. Ambasthya, 'Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj in the Shahabad District in Bihar', *PIHC*, Bombay Session, 1959, p. 272.

98. Ibid., pp. 273–4.

99. Koklat was the son of Hardat Shah and the great-grandson of Chilbar Shah, a younger son of Sangram. He had been recognized as the chief of Bhojpur by Dara (Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 75).

100. The *nishan* is dated 21st *Rabi-us-Sani* 1068 ah corresponding to 16 January 1958. Here is the confusion the *nishan* addressed to Amar Singh from Dara is dated 26 January 1658 whereas *nishan* to Jai Singh is dated 16 January 1958. The *nishan* to Amar Singh from Shah Shuja was issued sometime in the end of 1657. It appears that Sulaiman, who had already proceeded to the Eastern Provinces, had come to know about Amar Singh joining the side of Shah Shuja. Hence, he entered into an alliance with Koklat, which was approved of by Dara Shikoh in his *nishan* dated 16 January 1958. The *nishan* to Amar Singh by Dara Shikoh seems to have been a diplomatic move to wear Amar Singh away from the side of Shah Shuja.

101. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 65.

102. Ibid. The *nishan* is dated 25 March 1658, available at Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

103. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 59.

104. Ambashthya, 'Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj in the Shahabad District in Bihar', pp. 276–7.

105. Ibid., p. 277.

106.

Ibid., p. 279.

107. Ibid., p. 277.

108. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 70.

109. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 72.

110. Syed Hasan Askari, 'The Ujjainia Ancestors of Babu Kunwar Singh', *JBRS*, vol. XLI (41), 1955, pp. 114–15. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 84–6.

111. *Akhbarat Darbar-i-Muallah dated 2nd Jamaddi-ul Awwal*, 25 ry of Aurangzeb, corresponding to 29 April 1682, Jaipur State Achieves series, vol. XXVII, sr. no. 2023, p. 276. It is available at Nath Nagar Shodh Samasthan, Sitamau, Malwa, M.P. (Explanation: *Akhbarats* are the newsletters of the Mughal emperors, arranged in chronological order according to the regnal year of the emperors in numerous volumes, and, are mentioned like this.)

112. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 99.

113. Ibid., p. 100.

114. *Jaipur Akhbarat*, pt. II, sr. no. 1840, vol. XXXI, pp. 118–20. Also see Ambashthya, 'The Ujjainia Rajahs of Bhojpur in *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah', PIHC*, 30th Session, Bhagalpur, 1968, p. 166.

115. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur (1320–1860 ad)*, p. 76.

116. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 71.

117. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj, dated 18/30 July 1893, to the Honorary Philological Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

118. Ambashthya, 'The Ujjainia Rajahs of Bhojpur in *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah', PIHC*, Bhagalpur, 1968, pp. 166–7.

119. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i Muallah*, dated 27 December 1681, 25th ry of Aurangzeb, vol. XXVII, p. 6.

120. Ibid.

121. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj to the Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, dated 18/30 July 1893.

122. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah*, dated 27 December 1681, 25th ry of Aurangzeb, vol. XXVII, p. 6.

123. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah*, dated 14 February 1682, 25th ry of Aurangzeb.

124. Ibid.

125. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah*, dated 29 April 1682, 25th ry of Aurangzeb, Jaipur

State Archives Series, vol. XXXVII, Sr. no. 0232, p. 276.

126. Letter of Manager, Dumraon Raj, to the Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, dated 18/30 July 1893.

127. The *Akhbarat* dated 16 August 1682 informs us that Shaikh Ibrahim, the nephew of late Daud Khan, the *faujdar* of Shahabad alias Bhojpur, was appointed the *faujdar* of Badaon and conferred the rank of 600 *zat* and 600 *sawar (DoAsapa)*, and awarded 60,00,000 *dams* or Rs. 2 lakh for the establishment *Se Bande* (three slaves/men). *The faujdari* of Bhojpur was conferred upon Rudra Singh Ujjainia and the above-mentioned rewards were to be deducted from the revenue of Bhojpur (Jaipur, *Akhbarat* sr. no. 2125 (1–2), p. 549).

128. The *Akhbarat* is dated 7th *Rabiul Awwal* 26th ry of Aurangzeb, i.e. 1 March 1683.

129. Ibid.

130. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 74–5. The *farman* given by Aurangzeb to Raja Rudra Singh, has been recorded in this urdu text.

131. Ibid.

132. It was a feudal right.

133. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 75–6.

134. This Persian document of Dumraon Raj is dated *Rabiul AwwaL* 28th ry of Aurangzeb (7 February 1685).

135. This was a grant for meeting administrative expenses.

136. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 76–7.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid., pp. 100–1.

139. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj to the Secretary of the Asiatic Society, Bengal, Calcutta, dated 18/30 July 1893.

140. Ibid., pp. 84–5, 101–2.

141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 103.

144. Ibid., p. 105.

145. Ibid.

146. This Persian document is dated 1083 All or 1631, and is addressed jointly to Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh.
147. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 107.
148. Ibid., p. 108.
149. Ibid., p. 107.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid., p. 108.
152. Ibid., p. 109. The *nishan* has been recorded in this Urdu source.
153. Ibid.
154. This was a feudal custom.
155. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 109–10.
156. Ibid., p. 110.
157. Ibid., p. 66. However, Francis Buchanan says that Sujan Singh had three sons: Udwant, Vudhur and Subha (Buchanan, *An Account of the District of Shahabad in 1812–13*, Patna, Bihar & Orissa Research Society, 1936, p. 363).
158. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 112–13.
159. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raja to the Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhajpur (1320–18600*, p. 93.
160. Ghulam Hussain Khan Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, tr. John Briggs, London, The Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, vol. I, pp. 35ff.
161. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 112.
162. Ibid., p. 116. The *farman* is recorded in this text.
163. Murtuza Husain IlaYar Usmani Bilgrami, *Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim*, Lukhnow, Newal Kishor Press, 1879, p. 131.
164. Balmukand Mehta, *Balmukand Nama*, ed. and tr. Satish Chandra, Bombay, 1972, p. 15. This is the collection of letters of Syed Abdullah Khan to the important nobles during first half of the eighteen century.
165. Muzaffar Alam, 'Eastern India in the Early Eighteenth Century "crisis": Some Evidence from Bihar', *IESHR*, 28(1) 1991, New Delhi, Sage, p. 56.
166. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i Muallah*, dated 3rd and *4th julus* of Farrukh Siyar's reign (May-June 1715), pp. 28, 41.
167.

The author of *Iqbalnama-i Farrukhsiyar* narrates a story which reveals the bad condition of Patna during the time of Mir Jumla's *subedari.* He says, 'A Mughal entered the house of a certain man with a bottle of wine and a cup in his hand. It so happened that there was no one in the house except a young woman. It took no time for her to grasp the situation and she pretended to be polite and affable. She seated the Mughal on the bed and stood before him as if she was ready to attend to his wants. The Mughal put the bottle and the cup in her hands and began to drink. The lady continued to participate in all this. When she found that the Mughal had become dead-drunk, she finished his life with knife, left the house and went to another house' (Anonymous, *Iqbalnama-i-Farrukhsiyar*, Rampur Ms, ascribed to Shivdas Lakhnawi, the author of *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam.* The book provides details of the events of the times of Farrukh Siyar and Muhammad Shah, p. 9.)

168. Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan, *Tazkirat-us-Salatin Chaghta*, manuscript is available in Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, p. 378.

169. S.H. Askari, *Medieval Bihar Sultanate & Mughal Period* Patna, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1990, p. 204.

170. Khafi Khan, *Mutakhab-ul Lubab*, ed., Kabir al Din Ahmad and Wolseley, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1860–74, p. 739.

171. *Akhbarat*, dated 19 Dhul Qada, *5 julus*of Farrukh Siyar (October 1717), pp. 28, 41.

172. Murtuza Husain Ila Yar Usmani Bilgrami, *Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim*, Lucknow, Newal Kishor Press, 1879, pp. 132–33.

173. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojgur*, p. 100.

174. Alam, 'Eastern India in the Early Eighteenth Century "Crisis": Some Evidence from Bihar', p. 59.

175. The Persian Document is dated 1st Rajab, 1132 (28 April 1720), it bears the seal of Murtuza Khan Fidwi-i-Badshah Gazi Muhammad Rafi-ul-Darjat.

176. Ibid. The document is dated 5th Shahan 1st year of the reign (June 1720). It bears the seal of Khan-i-Zaman Khan Bahadur Fidwi-i-Badshah Gazi Muhammad Rafi-ul-Darjat.

177. Ibid. The Persian document is dated 17th Shawwal (12 September 1722). It bears the seal of Raushan Ahmad.

178. Ibid.

179. Ibid. The Persian document is dated 5th Rabius-sani San 1135 AH (6 January 1724). It bears the seal of Aqidat Khan Muhammad Shahi.

180. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, pp. 98–9.

181. The Persian Document. The document is dated 5th Shawwal, 5th year of the reign, i.e. 10 July 1718.

182. Ibid. The document bears the seal of Askar Khan, Fidwi-i-Badshah Gazi Mohammad Shah, 1131 sab Julus, i.e. 1719.

183. The *sand is* recorded in Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 121. The grant was made through a *sanad* dated 29th Shahan, seventh year of the reign (i.e. 6 July 1719). It bears the seal of Khani Zaman Khan Bahadur, Fidwi-i-Badshah Gazi Mohammad Farrukh Siyar.

184. Rangnath Ramchandra Diwakar, *Bihar Through the Ages*, Bombay, Orient Longmans, 1959, p. 502.

185. Tekari is a village 12 miles from the town of Gaya in Bihar. It was one of the important chieftaincies during this period.

186. Nokha was a chieftaincy but now it is a village about 20 miles north of Sasaram in Bihar.

187. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 77.

188. Ibid.

189. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 121, the *sanad* is recorded in this Urdu text.

190. The Persian document *(parwana)*, is dated 20th Ramzan, twelfth regnal year (18 March 1731).

191. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 123.

192. The *parwana* is recorded in *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 123–4, and bears the seal of Qazi Syeduddin Khan Qazi-ul-Quzzat Khadim-i-Shariah Muhammadi Bajan.

193. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 112.

194. It was a special grant for the protection of his life and property.

195. Diwakar, *Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 503.

196. In the book *History of Bihar*, the name of Bharat Singh instead of Raja Horil Singh has been mentioned. It seems that both were the names of the same Raja (Govind Mishra, *History of Bihar 1740–72*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970, p. 20.

197. Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, vol. I, p. 374.

198. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 130, the *parwana* is recorded in this source and bears the seal of Nawab Wazir-ul-Mamalik Qamruddin Khan Chin Bahadur Hasrat Jung Itmadud-Daula.

199. Diwakar, *Bihar Through Ages*, p. 504.

200.

Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainias*, II, p. 132.

201. Ibid., pp. 132–3.

202. Ibid., p. 137.

203. Ibid., pp. 136–7.

204. Ibid., p. 137. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazeteers*, p. 77.

205. Mishra, *History of Bihar 1740–72*, pp. 53–4.

206. H.N. Sinha, ed., *Fort William India House Correspondence(1757–59)*, New Delhi, Archives of India, 1957, vol. II, p. BVI.

207. Ibid., p. XXXVIII.

208. Arthur Broome, *History of the Rise and Progress of the BengalArmy*, Calcutta, Sanders, Cones and Company, 1850, vol. I, p. 281.

209. Mishra, *History of Bihar*, p. 79.

210. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, pp. 78–9.

211. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 110. This is a very important work related to the Ujjainia chieftaincy and it helped a lot in the completion of the third chapter of my book. I have consulted it particularly for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

212. Ibid.

213. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 79.

214. Ibid.

215. A letter preserved in the National Archives of India, Persian department, no. 423, has been written on 22 November 1761.

216. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 78. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 143–4.

217. Ghulam Husain Khan Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, tr. John Briggs, London, The Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, vol. II, p. 425.

218. Ibid. Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnama*, edited and translated in Urdu by Hakim Syed Yusuf Rizvi, Patna, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1998, pp. 76f.

219. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 143–4.

220. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 79. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 112.

221. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 112.

222. Ibid., pp. 113–14.

223. Pamphlet of Dumrao Raj referred to in para 2 of Shahabad Collector's letter no. 267 W, 13 June 1908.

224. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 117.

225. Diwakar, *Bihar Through the Ages*, pp. 588–9.

226. Proceedings of the Provincial Council of Revenue, Patna, 13 April 1778, vol. 14. Also see, Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p.117.

227. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 117.

228. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 146–50.

229. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad, Bihar District Gazetteers*, pp. 79–80.

230. Ibid.

231. Ibid.

232. Diwakar, *Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 593.

233. J.F.W. James, ed., *Selections from the Correspondence of the Revenue Chiefof Bihar, 1781–86*, Patna, Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1919, p. 28.

234. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 120. The Collectors letter to the Board of Revenue, no. 267W, para 2, dated 13 June 1908.

235. Letters from W.A. Brooke to the Committee of Revenue, dated 8 October 1782.

236. Extracts from the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, 3 October 1786, vol. 5, nos. 7–9.

237. Ibid., 21 September 1787, vol. 25, no. 4.

238. Ibid., 30 December 1788, vol. 57, no. 18.

239. Ibid., 30 July 1789, vol.73, no. 4. Also the Governor-General in Council to the Board of Revenue, 17 July 1789.

240. Letters from W.A. Brooke to the Committee of Revenue, 30 September 1789.

241. Extracts from the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, 30 November 1789, O.C. no. 33.

242. Letters from W.A. Brooke to the Committee of Revenue, 20 September 1790, 18 November 1790, vol. 103, no. 5.

243. Extracts from the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, November 1793, vol. 117.

244. Land Revenue Settlement of Shahabad, published in 1921, p. 14.

245. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 41.

246. Ibid.

247. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 162–3.

248. James, ed., *Selections from the Correspondence of the Revenue Chief of Bihar, 1781–86*, p. 42. Francis Buchanan also notes that, 'Raja Bikramjit Singh was a careless man and was not able to rebuild his estate and died leaving overwhelmed in debt. Jai Prakash has paid off considerable part, has rebuilt some of the houses and still going with that work and keeps a decent establishment….' (Francis Buchanan, *An Account of the District of Shahabad, 1812–13*, Patna, Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1934, pp. 360–1).

249. Pamphlet of Dumraon Raj referred to in para 2 of Shahabad Collector's letter no. 267W, dated 13 June 1908.

250. Buchanan, *An Account of the District of Shahabad, 1812–13*, pp. 363–5.

251. Ibid., p. 363. Buchanan writes 'the greatest defect in the management of Jai Prakash's affairs is that he has farmed the rent without taking adequate security for the repair of the reservoirs but he has secured the payment of the middleman's agreement by giving each a portion of the high and inundated land, both of which seldom fail in the season. Besides the expenses of the village tax-collectors (*patwaris*, watchmen and others) were also met by the poor ryots.'

252. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 184–5.

253. Ibid., p. 186.

254. Ibid.

255. Ibid., p. 192.

256. Ibid., pp. 193–7.

257. Ibid.

258. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 133.

259. Ibid. pp. 133–4

260. K.K. Datta, *Biography ofKunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, Patna, KPJRI, 1957, p. 8.

261. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. III, pp. 66–7.

262. Datta, *Biography ofKunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 11. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. III, p. 78.

263.

Datta, *Biography ofKunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 13.

264. Ibid.

265. Ibid, pp. 13–15.

266. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. III, p. 79.

267. Ibid.

268. Ibid., p. 80ff.

269. Datta, *Biography ofKunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 18.

270. Ibid., p. 367.

271. Ibid., pp. 368–9.

272. Ibid., pp. 20–5.

273. Ibid., p. 27.

274. Ibid., p. 28.

275. Ibid.

276. Dalippur is about 15 km from Jagdishpur.

277. Datta, *Biography ofKunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 26.

278. Ibid., p. 22.

279. Ibid.

280. Ibid.

281. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. III, pp. 207–8.

282. John James Halls, *Two Months in Arrah in 1857*, London, Longman and Roberts, 1860, p. 33.

283. Ibid., pp. 36–7. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, pp. 145–6.

284. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 146.

285. Ibid.

286. Presently this house is known as Ara House. It is situated in the premises of Maharaja College, Ara.

287. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 148.

288. Datta, *Biography ofKunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 120.

289. Ibid., p. 121.
290. Evelyn Wood, *The Revolt in Hindustan 1857–59*, London, Methuen & Co., 1908, p. 78.
291. Datta, *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, pp. 121–2.
292. Ibid., p. 135.
293. Ibid., pp. 146–7.
294. Ibid., pp. 149.
295. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 152.
296. Datta, *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 158.
297. Ibid.
298. Ibid., p. 155
299. Ibid., p. 158.
300. Ibid., p. 160
301. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 154.
302. Ibid.
303. Ibid.
304. Ibid., p. 155.
305. Datta, *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, p. 161.
306. Rajiva Nain Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p. 155.
307. Ibid., p. 156.
308. Datta, *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, pp.170–1.
309. Ibid.
310. Ibid.
311. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

The Cheros of Palamau

Many tribes rose to power in the period following the decline of the Palas of Bihar and Bengal. The most prominent among them were the Bhars (a dominant community in eastern Uttar Pradesh and central Bihar), the Kharwars (in the Sone Valley) and the Cheros in south Bihar. However, the Cheros emerged as the most powerful chieftaincy of the Bihar *suba*. They established small principalities in the Shahabad, Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Palamau regions of Bihar, and remained a force to reckon with for about three hundred years from 1150 to 1450.[1]

It seems that the Cheros[2] were able to establish their power in western Bihar in the first quarter of the twelfth century, and the area over which they ruled extended from the east of Varanasi to the west of Patna and Bihar Sharif, and from the south of the Ganga to the north of the Vindhya range (Kaimur). They were described as the masters of the Gangetic plains.[3]

According to local traditions of the twelfth century, four prominent Chero chiefs belonging to the Kolarian tribe of Dravidian origin who held a large area in the south of Bihar or the Kikat region (Magadha), in general, and Bhojpur, in particular, were ruling in this region.[4] Bihea was the headquarters of the Chero chief, Ghughulia, who is still remembered in folklore. The headquarters of the second kingdom was Tirawan, about a mile from Dumraon, in the heart of the Bhojpur region. Raja Sita Rai, the son of Ramchandra Rai, was the ruling chief during this period. Chainpur was the headquarters of the third principality with Raja Salabahim as the ruler.[5] Raja Phulchand was the Chero chief of the fourth kingdom, which included Chakai, Tulsipur, Ramgrawa, Piri, Biri, Jogibar, Bhairia and Ghosia. The headquarters of this kingdom was Deo Markande in the *pargana* of Dinara in Sasaram.

The Cheros were, however, expelled from many places by the Ujjainias of Bhojpur with whom they seem to have been engaged in frequent fights from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.[6] Afghan

sources mention that the Cheros were quite powerful in the Shahabad region. Abbas Khan Sarwani, the author of *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, writes that Maharata Chero had become so powerful that Sher Shah had to send Khawas Khan, one of his most competent military commanders, to punish him. Khawas Khan moved swiftly into the Chero chief's headquarters but before the campaign could be effectively taken up, Sher Shah overtook Humayun at Chausa and a full-scale war with the Mughals appeared to be imminent.[7] Therefore, Khawas Khan was called back and the campaign against the Chero chief was temporarily suspended. How-ever, soon after his conquest of the Mughals, Sher Shah dispatched Khawas Khan once again and the Chero chief was defeated and killed. Despite Maharata Chero's defeat, according to Niamatullah, the Cheros used to come out of their strongholds in the hills and forests, and harass the peasants of south Bihar, entirely closing the road to Gaur. Ahmad Yadgar Khan, the author of *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, narrates another incident about a clash between the armies of Sher Shah and Maharata Chero.[8] He writes that Sher Shah wanted to take possession of a white elephant called Shayam Sundar from Maharata Chero. On the latter's refusal, Sher Shah ordered Khawas Khan to punish the *raja* and capture the elephant. Khawas Khan marched from Rohtas at the head of 4,000 horses, crossed a river and passed through a very difficult mountain defile. The Chero chief was besieged and compelled to surrender the elephant. Khawas Khan returned to Sher Shah along with the coveted white elephant and a huge war booty.[9] The destruction of the Chero chief is mentioned as one of the three great achievements of Sher Shah.[10]

We have given a brief account of the four Chero chieftaincies of the Kikat region above. None of these, however, remained important during the Mughal period. The Chero chief of Palamau in extreme south Bihar in the Chota Nagpur region emerged as the most powerful ruler among the Cheros, during the Mughal period. In the present chapter, we have discussed their relations with the Mughal rulers in detail.

Palamau is situated on the Auranga River about 20 miles southeast of Daltonganj.[11] It is beyond the southern limits of Bihar, spread over an uneven land leading to the plateau of Chota Nagpur in the south-east and the central provinces in the south-west. The area is full of broken mountains and hills with many rain-fed rivers that are unfit for navigation and yield no assured supply of water for irrigation. The southern part of the district is extremely rocky and barren with only small patches of dense forests at some places. In the northern part, the valleys are a little wider and more fertile but no-where in the district is it possible to get more than 7 or 7 miles of cultivable land in one place. From the summit of a ridge or hill, the country appears covered

by a waving sheet of low forest with all sign of human habitation concealed from view except perhaps a glimpse of, here and there, a low, red roof, a distant grove of trees, or an occasional herd of cattle.[12] Palamau, according to Mughal historians, lay south of Patna, the distance from the latter to the northern boundary of the former being 71 miles. It is likely that the Cheros territory extended up to Daudnagar or Arwal where the remains of Cheros forts have been found. Toward the north-east, the Cheros were mentioned by Abul Fazl as the principal *zamindar* in Chai Champa (Ramgarh) and Pundag (Palamau).[13]

The Chero chiefs of Palamau appear to have been descendants of Raja Salabahim of Chainpur. It is believed that a Chero chief of Shahabad, Bhagwant Rai, took service under the Raksel Rajput chief, Man Singh of Palamau, and after murdering him,[14] founded his own kingdom in around 1572.[15] Thereafter, we have no account of any other Chero ruler until Anant Chero a contemporary of Emperor Akbar.

In contemporary Persian historical works, Anant Chero is referred to in the account of 1590–1 when Raja Man Singh, the governor of Bihar, launched an attack against the refractory chiefs of Bihar. It mentions that after suppressing the chiefs of Kharagpur and Gidhaur, Man Singh attacked Anant Chero of Palamau. Anant Chero made a desperate attempt to check the advance of Man Singh by blocking his path but failed miserably to do so. The Cheros offered strong resistance to the invading army but they were outnumbered; a large number of them were killed and many of them were taken prisoner.[16] Raja Man Singh captured valuable booty, including fifty-four elephants, which were dispatched to the imperial court.[17] Apparently Palamau was brought under Mughal administration. However, from the *Akbarnama* and other contemporary accounts, it is not very clear as to what sort of understanding was reached between the Mughals and Anant Chero. Generally, in the terms of understanding reached between chieftains and the Mughal imperial authority, besides accepting the overlordship of the latter, the former also agreed to pay either *peshkash* or paid *malguzari* or offered military service. In the case of the Cheros, we do not get any reference to indicate that Anant Chero formally accepted any of these conditions. However, the Cheros did not create any problem for Akbar. But soon after his death, Anant Chero drove the imperial troops out from Palamau and declared his independence. Due to the rebellion of Prince Khusrau, it seems that no immediate action could be taken against the rebels. In 1607, after the appointment of Afzal Khan as the governor of Bihar, and after Iradat Khan had made his *diwan* and *bakhshi*, the emperor Jahangir ordered both of them to lead an expedition against Anant Chero. The two launched an attack

on the rebels but Afzal Khan, suffering from an incurable disease, died within two weeks of the launching of the offensive.[18] The campaign, therefore, was given up. Soon after, the Mughal officers launched repeated attacks on the Cheros and inflicted heavy losses on them. The situation became so bad that the Chero chief shifted his capital deep into his territory to protect himself.[19]

During the same period, another branch of the Cheros led by Kumkum Chand Jharap was also involved in a bitter struggle with the Ujjainias of Bhojpur. The *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* has discussed in detail the struggle of the Cheros to regain their lost position, which continued for almost four years (1607–11).[20] As mentioned earlier, the Cheros were extremely hostile towards the Ujjainias who had expelled them from the Bhojpur region, their ancestral homeland. Around 1607, a number of Chero chiefs combined to launch a spirited attack on the Ujjainias.[21] One of the descendants of Sita Ram Rai of Bhojpur, Kum Kum Chand Jharap expelled the Ujjainias and recaptured a major part of their territory. Jharap was a courageous and powerful Chero chief. He defied the imperial armies stationed at Arwal, Sherghati and Aurangabad, and plundered and pillaged a large number of villages.

The Ujjainias could not offer much resistance because their chief, Raja Narayan Mal, who had usurped the throne after deposing the weak Raja Mukut Mani in 1607, had gone to the Mughal court to get his confirmation as the ruler of the Ujjainias from Emperor Jahangir. As a consequence, the Cheros succeeded in driving the Ujjainias out from a large part of the Bhojpur region. It seems that Raja Narayan Mal came to know of the attack of the Cheros while he was still at the imperial court. He brought these developments to the notice of the emperor and also got the assurance of imperial support against the Cheros. Thereafter, he immediately returned to his people and set up his headquarters at Buxar. To check the further advance of the Cheros, he raised a strong army and deployed it from Buxar to Tirawan along the Ganga. This action of Narayan Mal further confirms our suggestion that the Ujjainias had been driven to the Ganga and that the Cheros had virtually reoccupied their old territory.[22] With the arrival of Narayan Mal, the Ujjainias regrouped and started making strong efforts to recapture their lost territories. Kum Kum Chand Jharap realized that he would not be able to resist the onslaught of Narayan Mal alone for long and appealed to the Cheros of the Sonepari region to come to his help. The Sonpari Cheros responded favourably and a large number of them, led by the *rajas* of Kaddhar, Anandichak and Balaunja (Japla), joined Kum Kum Chand Jharap to counter the Ujjainias. They repaired the trenches around the Tirawan fort, reinforced it with war material and other provisions, and deployed their own retainers from Tirawan to Kaddhar and upto the river

Sone.[23]

The rival armies faced each other for twenty-one days. On the twenty-second day, the Cheros made a determined attack, showering arrows from all sides to expel the Ujjainias from their secure positions. The Ujjainias moved cautiously in a row firmly behind their shields and succeeded in repulsing the Cheros from their positions. They moved further and launched a surprise attack on the fort of Tirawan. The besieged were under tremendous pressure because of shortage of food, fodder and other war material. The morale of the besieged was so low that they contemplated vacating the fort. Fortunately, at just about the same time, Raja Madha Mundra of Lohardaga came to their help. He made a spirited speech to motivate the Cheros to continue their battle against the Ujjainias as follows:

> Brothers do not lose heart. This is a battle field. To run away from it, is shameful. This is our forefather's land. To die for it, is our duty. The courage and bravery of the people always prevail in the world. It is a matter of sorrow that a handful of Ujjainias should put us to rout. The enemies are nothing. There is dissension among them. Victory is ours; let our swords and axe drinks their blood. Let us put them to sword and spare none.[24]

Heartened by these words, the Cheros fought bravely and foiled the attempt of the Ujjainias to capture the fort. A large number of Ujjainias were killed or forced to retreat. Pratap Singh, the brother of Raja Narayan Mal was in front of the retreating Ujjainia army. The Cheros mistook him for Narayan Mal and surrounded him. At about the same time, Thakur Rai Kalyan Singh, the *bakhshi* of the Mughal imperial army who had been left at Buxar by Narayan Mal with half the army, reached Bhojpur and joined him. Word spread in the Chero camp that imperial army had arrived to help the Ujjainias. The Cheros, once again, became demoralized with this new development; however, they continued their struggle. On the other hand, with this reinforcement Narayan Mal launched an attack on the Cheros from all four sides with renewed vigour. The Cheros, too, responded vigorously. All male members of the community joined the battle and the women helped them by throwing stones with slings.[25] A fierce fight ensued and in hand-to-hand engagement, the commanders of both the armies showed great valour. The Ujjainias succeeded in completely defeating the Cheros. A large number of Cheros, including Saran Jharap, the *raja* of Lohardaga, Haratpal and Raja Madha Mundra, were killed in the battle. Those who escaped the slaughter were drowned in the river Sone. A huge booty came into the possession of the Ujjainias. Deogon and Kothi, the two important forts of the Cheros, were razed to the ground, as noted earlier. This important battle was fought in 1611 on the ninth day (*navami*) of Dussehra. After this victory, Narayan Mal was accepted as the

undisputed leader of the Ujjainias. He successfully destroyed the power of Cheros and expelled them from the Bhojpur region. However, after ruling for a decade, he was killed by his own kinsmen in a family feud.[26]

Surprisingly, we do not find any reference to Anant Chero in this war with the Ujjainias. There is also no reference to him in Mughal chronicles after Afzal Khan's failed expedition against him. Anant Chero died in 1619 and was succeeded by his son Bhupat Rai, who also died within a year. Raja Bhupat Rai was succeeded by Medini Rai (1620–34), the greatest Chero ruler, whose reign had been described as the age of peace and prosperity. However, in one of the inscriptions at Palamau, Medini Rai is mentioned as the son of Anant Rai, who was the son of Bhagwant Rai. Bhupat Rai is not mentioned in the inscription. It seems that Medini Rai might have captured the kingdom after defeating his elder brother, Bhupat Rai, in a family feud, which was common in chieftaincies.[27]

After consolidating his position, Medini Rai started making efforts to expand his chieftaincy. He invaded Khokhra in the Chota Nagpur region, defeated Durjan Sal, its chief, and ransacked his capital. He also extended his sway over south Gaya, and set up posts at Kothi (the *pargana* of Sherghat in Gaya), Kunda (the Chatra subdivision of Hazaribagh), and Deogan (Palamau). The first two outposts were on the highway to Palamau and Deogan might have been some kind of fort before it was rebuilt by Bharat Rai, at a later date.[28] Medini Rai also conquered some of the *rajas* of smaller kingdoms who paid him tribute. These kingdoms were Belounja Siris, Jupla, Kutumba and Sherghati in Gaya; Kunda Karnapura and Ramgarh in Hazaribagh; and a portion of Surguja.[29]

Medini Rai's claim of being one of the greatest rulers of the Cheros rests not so much on his conquests but on his establishing peace and prosperity in the chieftaincy. He founded villages, constructed irrigation works, encouraged the reclamation of land and settled tribes like the Paharias. Medini Rai also distributed land to the landless people. A popular folklore mentions that every household was provided with bread and butter in his time (*raja medinia ghar ghar baje bathania*).[30]

The most remarkable building constructed by Medni Rai was a fort built on a hill overlooking the river Auranga. It was more elegantly constructed than the old one and was essentially a military fort. The structure was completed according to a bilingual inscription (in Persian and Devanagari) of February 1634 that addresses Medini Rai as Maharaja and begins with a salutation to both Allah the great and Ramchandraji.[31] Medini Rai died towards the end of 1634. He was succeeded by his son, Raja Pratap Rai (Singh).[32]

According to one tradition, that Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung, the governor of Bihar, attacked Palamau in 1637.[33] However, it is quite clear that he had not done so in 1627–8; during this time, he was engaged in reducing the rebel Raja Pratap Ujjainia. In the same year, Shaista Khan was appointed the governor of Bihar in place of Abdullah Khan. It appears that the Cheros became more defiant during the years of the governorship of Abdullah Khan. One of the invasions against the Cheros of Palamau took place during 1641–3 which has been described in detail in the *Badshahnama*.[34]

According to Lahori, the rulers of Palamau took the advantage of the dense forest in their chieftaincy, which was almost inaccessible and their mountain fortress showed no sign of obedience to the governor of the *suba* of Bihar.[35] Shaista Khan informed the emperor about the state of affairs. The emperor ordered him to drive Pratap Chero away and clear the country from the enemy.[36] Leaving the charge of Patna to his son, Shaista Khan marched towards Palamau on 12 October 1641 along with Zabardast Khan, Atash Khan Dakhini and Sayyid Mirza (brother of Mukhtar Khan), at the head of 5,000 horse and 15,000 infantry, which included the troops of certain local chiefs. Before entering the territory of Palamau, he organized his army in battle formation and marched in that order. The entire area was so hostile to the Mughals that whenever they halted, trenches were dug and earthwork completed around the camp to protect it camp from surprise attacks. A large number of woodcutters were employed to clear the forest and widen the roads for the smooth movement of the army. In spite of all these precautions being taken, the Cheros often succeeded in making surprise attacks on the Mughal army.[37]

Clearing road-blocks and repulsing surprise attacks, the Mughal army succeeded in reaching close to the northern side of the fort of Palamau on 26 January 1642. Shaista Khan pitched his camp on the bank of a river that flowed past the fort. The Cheros launched several attacks on the Mughal positions but failed to push them back. In the meantime, the imperialists occupied a hillock commanding the fort in a surprise attack and opened heavy artillery fire on the ramparts. Pratap Rai became alarmed by this new development and sent a message to Shaista Khan with an offer of submission, along with a *peshkash* of Rs. 80,000. He also promised to present himself before the governor at Patna. The terms offered by the Cheros almost fulfilled all the demands of the imperialists; moreover, Shaista Khan was anxious to end the war before the fast-approaching rainy season. Therefore, he accepted the offer immediately and returned to Patna on 12 February 1642 after receiving the *peshkash*.[38]

Although, Pratap Rai had succeeded in saving Palamau from plunder, by offering very favourable terms to the Mughals, but the

people of Palamau were not happy. It appears that Pratap Rai made no efforts to pacify the common people or his chiefs. Lahori writes that the common people, especially the chiefs, were so unhappy with his policies that they started making efforts to overthrow him. Darya Rai and Tej Rai, his paternal uncles, came to Patna and met Itiqad Khan, the governor of the *suba* and sought his help in getting Pratap Rai removed from the chieftaincy. They also promised to capture him and hand him over to the governor who had apparently assured them of his complete cooperation. Therefore, after returning from Patna, they imprisoned Pratap Rai and Tej Rai assumed the charge of the chieftaincy. As soon as Itiqad Khan came to know of these developments, he ordered Tej Rai to send Pratap to Patna immediately. Tej Rai, however, failed to comply with these orders and made false excuses.

Darya Rai became unhappy with Tej Rai soon after he became the head of the chieftaincy and along with some leading chiefs, met Itiqad Khan and apprised him of his misdeeds. They requested him to dethrone Tej Rai and help Darya Rai to assume the headship of the chieftaincy. To show his fidelity to the governor, Darya Rai offered to surrender Deogan to the Mughal authority.[39] He and the two commanders of the fort waited in person on Zabardast Khan, the Mughal commander, when he arrived to take possession of it but only a section of the inhabitants of Deogan submitted although the imperial government had promised to protect them. Soon after the transfer of the fort to the Mughals, a large number of people rose in revolt but they were suppressed by the imperialists.

The occupation of the Deogan fort gave the Mughals a strategic advantage for leading an invasion on Palamau. Zabardast Khan strengthened the fortification of Deogan with more troops and huge provisions. Meanwhile, despite his best efforts to win Itiqad Khan to his side, Darya Rai could not get the chieftaincy of Palamau. On the other hand, the presence of the Mughal troops at Deogaon provoked Tej Rai to launch an attack on them. He dispatched his *vakil*, Madan Singh Thakurai, along with some of his chieftains and detachments to attack Baoli Chewan[40] and expel the imperialists. However, in the battle fought with the Mughal forces, the Cheros were defeated and they took to flight. Itiqad Khan, the governor of Bihar, sent further reinforcements to the assistance of Zabardast Khan. He ordered ‘Abdullah Khan Najmsani, the *bakhshi* of Bihar, to march towards Palamau with Darya Rai and also promised to join him as soon as possible.[41]

Around the same time, according to Lahori, Surat Sen and Sabal Sen, the sons of Madan Singh Thakurai, taking advantage of the absence of Tej Rai from the capital when he had gone on a hunting

expedition, reinstated Pratap Rai as the ruler of Palamau.[42] The change was so sudden that Tej Rai and his followers could hardly do anything to retrieve the situation. It is odd that Tej Rai left the fort on a hunting excursion at a time when the Mughals were advancing towards Palamau at the instigation of Darya Rai. Zabardast Khan also marched to Palamau in support of the invading army. Pratap Rai (who was already reinstated as chief) realized that he was in no position to offer resistance to the Mughal army in the given situation. Therefore, he approached Zabardast Khan and offered him his submission. The latter insisted on his submission before the governor of Patna. After some hesitation, the Chero chief agreed to do so but demanded an assurance of personal safety from Zabardast Khan. To assure him, Zabardast Khan accompanied Pratap Rai to Patna and presented him to Itiqad Khan.[43] Pratap Rai presented Itiqad Khan with an elephant and a *peshkash* of Rs. 100,000. The latter was pleased with the offering and sent a favourable report to the emperor. He also recommended that Pratap Rai may be given a *mansab* of 1,000/1,000. The *jama* (the revenue estimate) of Palamau was fixed at Rs. 250,000 (1 crore *dams*) and the entire area of Palamau was assigned to him as his *tuyul* (an assignment of revenue), in March 1644.[44]

Jadunath Sarkar says that the tribute fixed by the Mughals at the end of the second Palamau campaign was exorbitant and that it was beyond the capacity of the *raja* to pay regularly.[45] The state naturally fell into arrears and relations with the imperial authority started deteriorating. Besides, the cattle raids of the Cheros across the Bihar frontier further complicated the situation. Sarkar adds that these evils increased during the war of succession.[46] However, we do not get a single reference in the Persian chronicles that Raja Pratap Rai paid regular *peshkash* to the Mughals during 1643–60. Surprisingly, no action was taken against him.

In 1660, Aurangzeb ordered Daud Khan, the governor of Bihar, to conquer the territory of Palamau.[47] On receipt of the imperial order, the latter marched towards Palamau in March 1661 at the head of a large army along with important military commanders such as Mirza Khan, the *faujdar* of Darbhanga; Tahawwur Khan, the *jagirdar* of Chainpur, and Raja Bahroz, the *zamindar* of Kharagpur (in Munger district). There were two strong forts in the vicinity of the town of Palamau, one on a neighbouring hill and the other on the plain. A big river flowed below the two. The forts were also surrounded by lofty hills and a dense forest. Three other forts were close to the borders of the province of Bihar: the Kothi fort, which was at a distance of about 50 miles from Palamau the Kunda fort, which was about 18 miles from the Kothi fort to the eastwards and the Deokan or Deogan fort, which was at a distance of about 25 miles from the Kothi fort

westwards. Daud Khan decided to capture the Kothi fort first. He arrived before it on 24 April. The Cheros, alarmed by the news of a huge army marching against them, had evacuated the fort and fled long before the arrival of Daud Khan. The fort was, thus, captured without a fight. Daud Khan, after making arrangements for the protection of the fort, marched towards Kunda. This fort was built on the top of a hill and was sufficiently equipped with all necessary weapons of defence. Though the distance from Kothi to this fort was only 20 miles, the route lay through dense forest and about half the way passed through a narrow defile over a high ridge. After the forest was cleared, Daud Khan marched towards Kunda. As soon as the Cheros came to know of the movement of the army towards the fort, they became frightened and abandoned it. Daud Khan reached the fort on 23 May 1660, occupied it without any opposition and completely dismantled it, so that it could not become the seat of any disorder in future.

As the rains had set in by this time, Daud Khan decided to stay at Kunda till the end of the season. To protect his army from surprise attacks by the Cheros and to keep the roads safe for the regular supply of provisions, he built mud forts at a distance of every 7 or 8 miles, and garrisoned them with a 100 horsemen together with musketeers and troops of *zamindars*.[48] After the end of the rainy season, Daud Khan made preparations to attack and storm Palamau. Having come to know of the movement of the Mughal army, Pratap Rai approached him, offered to subordinate himself to the Mughals and also agreed to pay an annual tribute regularly provided Daud Khan withdrew his invading army from Palamau. Daud Khan did not accept the proposals and continued his march. He organized his army into battle formation as soon as he reached Palamau. The command of the vanguard was given to Mirza Khan, and the left and right wings were given into the charge of Tahawwur Khan, Shaikh Tatar and Raja Bahroz, respectively. Daud Khan himself commanded the centre and 500 horsemen of his own contingent formed the rear guard. A large number of woodcutters were engaged under the charge of imperial officers, and Daud Khan's own men were ordered to clear the forest and make a road to Palamau, so that the enemy might not have any cover to lay an ambush and harass the army on its march. Posts were also established all along the route and garrisoned with troops. The army moved slowly because the clearing of forests and the building of roads used to take a lot of time. They could cover only about 20 miles in nine days.[49]

On 23 October 1661, they reached the village of Loharsi[50] from where the fort of Palamau was at a distance of 17 or 18 miles and encamped there. Upon the arrival of the invading army, Raja Pratap

became alarmed, and sent his trusted and confidential *vakil*, Surat Singh, to Daud Khan with an offer not only of complete subordination to the imperial authority but also an assurance of continued cooperation with the governor of Bihar. Raja Bahroz was also won over by him to intercede with Daud Khan. Raja Pratap further offered to pay Rs. 1 lakh as *peshkash* to the emperor and Rs. 50,000 to Daud Khan. The latter reported the offer to the imperial court and waited for the emperor's reply. Meanwhile, he received information that the enemy had attacked about 17 or 18 miles from his encampment and plundered a convoy of army provisions. Pratap Rai apologized for this act through his *vakil*, asserted that it had been committed without his knowledge or instructions, and immediately sent Rs. 50,000 of the promised *peshkash* to appease Daud Khan but the latter refused to accept his plea and decided to take action.[51]

He ordered his army to march forward and pitched his camp near the post of Palamau. On 29 November the Cheros came out of the fort to resist the further advance of the imperial army. Around the same time, Daud Khan received the emperor's reply wherein he had agreed to accept the proposal of the Chero chief on the condition of his conversion to Islam. Daud Khan communicated this order of the emperor to the chief and waited for his reply. However, the invading army was impatient to fight and reluctant to sit idle. On 24 December, Tahawwur Khan Barlas who was leading the campaign launched an attack on the Cheros. When Daud Khan came to know of this, he moved forward to reinforce Tahawwur Khan's advance guard. A pitched battle was fought for the entire day and a number of soldiers of the imperial army were killed. After sunset, they returned to their camps. In the dead of night, the Cheros brought up two cannons from the fort and began to bombard the imperial army. As Daud Khan's troops were on the lower ground, they suffered heavy casualties. The following morning, he launched a series of attacks on the Chero position but could not achieve much success because they were located on the top of neighbouring hills. However, after putting in much effort, Daud Khan ultimately succeeded in positioning some of his guns on the hill and bombarded the Chero lines more effectively. It had the desired effect: the Cheros began to lose courage and retreated, entrenching themselves on the bank of the river that flowed by the side of the fort. The road from Daud Khan's encampment to this entrenchment lay through thick forest. Two or three days were spent in having it cleared. When the road became passable for the troops, Daud Khan advanced and attacked the Chero positions. The battle lasted for about six hours. Many gallant deeds were performed by Daud Khan's troops. Ultimately, the Cheros were defeated and suffered heavy casualties. Those who were able to save their lives took

refuge in the fort. Without wasting any time and taking advantage of the great victory which his troops had achieved, Daud Khan launched an attack on the fort. The Cheros were taken by surprise, and retreated to the lower fort and hill entrenchments in the face of total defeat. The provisions and other valuables stored in the fort were also brought to the lower fort. Raja Pratap Rai sent away all his women and children into the forest but believing in the impregnability of his position, stood his ground with a band of trusted followers, and fought with dogged courage and resolution. The imperialists, however, broke through the outer fortifications and entering the town, reached the gate of the fort and stormed it. The fight raged furiously. Three hours of night had elapsed when the besieged began to give way and the chieftain himself escaped through a gate leading into the forest. Both the forts were, thus, captured by the invading army and the entire country was brought under subjugation. In this fight, sixty-one men of the invading force were killed and 177 wounded. The casualties on the other side were also very heavy. After a few days, scouts brought in the news that the Cheros had regrouped, entered the Deogan fort and were making preparations to fight again. Daud Khan deputed Shaikh Safi with a detachment of troops to crush them. The latter pushed on with speed toward Deogan and besieged the fort. The Cheros abandoned it in panic and fled.[52]

This invasion sounded the death knell of the Chero kingdom. Palamau was placed directly under the governor of Bihar. The Chero outposts at Kothi and Kunda were taken away from them; their capital lay in dust, desecrated. Their defeat was complete. It also marked the beginning of growing dissension among the different power groups of the Chero *raja*, his agents (*babuans*) and their Rajput *diwans* (*thakurais*). The Chero chiefs recovered slowly from the defeat but their recovery was never complete. The invasion was also unique in the sense that it formed the subject of a painting drawn by T.F. Peppe of Ranchi, representing the siege and capture of the fort of Palamau in which costumes were shining, and the Palamau chiefs and their armies were drawn as hillmen with bows and arrows. The painting map is now preserved in the Mannulal Library at Gaya, as a graphic.[53]

Daud Khan was honoured and rewarded by the imperial court. Many *zamindars* from various parts of Bihar who had participated in the Mughal expedition against the Cheros were recognized for their role. Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga displayed such valour in the course of the conquest of Palamau and Morang that he was given extensive *jagirs* in Munger, and other parts of Bihar and Bengal.[54]

The history of the Cheros during the next sixty years is marked by internal feuds. Shitab Rai's account sheds light on the history of Chota Nagpur till the advent of the British.[55] The Nagbanshi ruler is

described as the overlord of the Palamau (Chero), Badam and Ramgarh ghatwals. The ghatwali system had been fully established by then. Many parts of Gaya (Sher, Sherghati), Hazaribagh (Karanpur, Kothi, Badam) and Palamau (Jabla, Belaunja, Deogan, Paloon, Surguja) were settled with Mughal (Rohilla) *jagirdars*. These estates fetched revenue of Rs. 1,40,919. This included duties on the hill merchants (Rs. 4,000), which showed that the area was opened up for trade. The *peshkash* of the Palamau *jagirdari* was Rs. 4,140. The Cheros had not only lost their far-flung territories, such as Ser, Sherghati, Kothi and Sirguja, but also those nearer their seat of power, such as Deogan, Japla, Belaunja, etc.[56]

We find a reference to Fakhr-ud-Daula, the governor of Bihar during 1730, who marched to the hills by way of Kunda where he settled the *pargana* of Sher with Muazzam Khan, son of Azeez Khan, a Rohilla Pathan. The governor sent Muazzam Khan to suppress the rebellion in 1730 in Palamau. When he reached Derra, he found that the people of Palamau had blocked the road by felling trees, and were attacking the Mughals by throwing dust and showering arrows on them from the mountains. Muazzam Khan died of a wound. The news of his death frightened Fakhr-ud-Daula who sent Agaury Kunji Singh, the *qanungo*, to reach an understanding and compromise with the Cheros. Both parties agreed to a settlement. The *qanungo* received Rs. 12,000 from the ghatwal of Ramgarh on account of the Nagpur *raja* and Rs. 5,000 from the ghatwal of Palamau. The ghatwals promised to regularize the payment of the *peshkash*. Fakhr-ud-Daula returned to Patna. After three years, this revenue was discontinued.[57]

To the south, the Chero chiefs retained their independence but the north was controlled by other nobles. The *parganas* of Japla and Belaunja were settled by the *rajas* of Sonpura and two other *parganas* were granted to the family of Ghulam Husain Khan, the author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* by the emperor, Muhammad Shah. In this work, we find a reference to an expedition that Hedayat Ali Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar, undertook in 1740 to subdue the chieftains of the hill country. He wanted to bring the powerful *zamindar* of Ramgarh under his subordination. The deputy governor was supported by the other *zamindars* of the region (Raja Sundar Singh and Raja Jai Kishun Rai, both *zamindars* of the Palamau region, and some other *zamindars* of Siris, Kutumba and Sherghati) in his campaign.[58] With this great confederacy, he was able to capture the fortress of Ramgarh and other hilly tracts of the region.[59] After this hectic expedition, he was resting when the news reached him that Raghuji Bhonsle Pandit had sent an expedition of the Marathas forces with 40,000 cavalry to conquer Bengal and they would pass close to him through the hills on their way in a few days. He held consultations with his friends as the

forces he had with him were not sufficient to block the passage of the Marathas. They advised him to quit the hilly region and accordingly, he left the track and encamped at the foot of the chain. In few days, the Marathas rushed through and turning towards Panchet and Mayurbhanj, they attacked Bengal.[60]

We notice a development when Nawab Alivardi Khan was the governor of Bengal: Mustafa Khan, an Afghan commander, had helped Alivardi Khan immensely at the time of the Maratha invasion and the latter had assured him that he would soon make him the deputy governor of Bihar. However, Alivardi Khan could not fulfil his promise. Therefore, Mustafa Khan rebelled against him and began to trouble him. With the intention of plunder, Mustafa Khan went to the Shahabad district and entered the *zamindari* of Udwant Singh Ujjainia, the chief of Jagdishpur, in 1745. On hearing this news, Zainuddin Haibat Jang, the deputy governor of Bihar, moved to Shahabad. He got the support of the local *zamindars* and rich men. Raja Sunder Singh of Tekari, Namdar Khan of Narhat and Samoy, Sardar Khan and Kamghar Khan, the *zamindars* of Seres and Kotomba, Bishun Singh of Ramgarh, Pahalwan Singh and his brother, Surtur Singh, the *zamindars* of Sasaram and Chainpur, Buhrut Singh, of Arwal offered their services to him against the Afghans under Mustafa Khan. During 1745, Mustafa Khan was defeated and killed in one of the battles.[61] It seems that he had entered the Ujjainia chieftaincy for the purpose of plunder but did not harm it.

After the battle of Plassey (1757), the British began to take an interest in the chieftaincy of the Cheros. For a long time, the chieftaincy had faced crises and disturbances due to family feuds. In 1722, a rebellion took place in which the ruling chief, Ranjit Rai, was murdered and the throne was occupied by Jai Kishun Rai of Babuan, a member of the younger branch of the ruling Chero family. A few years later, Jai Kishun was killed by the relatives of Ranjit Rai and Chitrajit Rai was made the *raja*. Jai Kishun's family fled to Maigra in the Gaya district and took refuge with Udwant Ram, a *qanungo*, who, in 1770, took Gopal Rai, the grandson of the murdered *raja*, to Patna and presented him to Captain Jacob Camac, the government agent, as the rightful heir to the Palamau Raj.[62] Camac promised them the assistance of the British government. At about the same time, Jiunath Singh, the *diwan* under Chitrajit Rai, had declared before Bellam at Aurangabad that the *raja* of Palamau would neither become a vassal of the British nor grant supplies to any British troops that might pass through his chieftaincy. News of this declaration reached Camac who sensed the rebellious mood of the *raja*. He dispatched a considerable force to Palamau to remove Chitrajit Rai and enthrone Gopal Rai. Jiunath Singh, the commander of the Palamau forces, attempted to

defend the passes through which the British troops tried to cross but could not succeed. Shortly after, the British troops appeared before the Palamau forts.

The Raja Chitrajit Rai's forces made their best efforts to resist them but the ill-equipped troops were no match for the British forces and took refuge inside the forts which were then besieged. The British artillery opened fire upon them but could not make any effect on the solid stone walls. However, there was a spot in one of the walls of the old fort, which, from outside, was built of solid material, and interior, was made of mud. It is said that it had been constructed by Medini Rai as a weak point in order to enable the ruling family to escape from there during the time of emergency. This weak point was known to a few persons and Udwant Ram, now in the British camp, exposed this spot. The guns were soon directed to it and a breach was made through which the British troops entered and captured the fort. Raja Chitrajit Rai fled to Ramgarh. Palamau was formally taken by the British into their possession. Gopal Rai was enthroned as the chief of Palamau and Udwant Ram received a *sanad* from Camac appointing him the *qanungo* of the *pargana* in 1772.[63] Though the British had established their hold on Palamau, the sons of the late *diwan* returned from Sirguja as soon as Captain Camac left the region and tried to take revenge on Udwant Ram. Gopal Rai conspired to remove him and treacherously got him murdered. The relatives of the murdered man approached the British officers at Leslieganj for help. The British troops marched to Shahpur, and Gopal Rai was taken prisoner and sent to Chatra for trial. He was sentenced to imprisonment in Patna where he died in 1781. He was succeeded by Basant Rai who also died in the same year. Basant Rai's brother, Churaman Rai, a minor, was raised to the throne. On coming of age, he was unable to manage the chieftaincy properly and a rebellion of the Cheros broke out in 1800 against economic exploitation. It seems that the Chero chiefs faced a lot pressure from the British to pay an exorbitant revenue and clear the arrears. However, this rebellion of the Cheros was suppressed by the British.

The extravagance and incapacity of Churaman Rai gradually reduced him to a state of bankruptcy and brought the administration into disorder. There is a detailed account of this state of things in Hamilton's description of 'Hindoostan' (1820), which says

> In 1814, arrears having accumulated to the amount of Rs. 55,7000, owing to the incapacity of the Raja Churaman and the refractory conduct of the disaffected jagirdars, the pargana was brought to the hammer and it was purchased by the British Government for Rs. 51,000. The general regulations for the public dues and administration of justice had before extended to this estate, in common with the other places dependent on the Bengal Presidency; but in consequence of the wild state of the country, consisting chiefly of hills and forests, and the rude manners of

its inhabitants, these regulations could not be said to have more than a nominal operation in the interior. In fact the realization of the revenue partook more of the nature of voluntary contribution, than of that active and punctual enforcement of the rights of Government which was practiced in all the other old districts, and from which the landholders of Palamau had no peculiar claims to exemption. Besides these reasons, being a frontier station, it became of importance to vest the possession of the pargana in a person possessed of sufficient firmness to coerce the *jagirdars*, without oppressing them by illegal exactions or other severities. For this purpose Raja Fateh Singh was selected but he died in 1814. Then finally after discussion the decision was taken and the chieftaincy of Palamau was handed over to Raja Ghansham Singh and a proper measure was taken so that the proper collection of the revenue would be done and there would not arise any mismanagement of estate and the rights and immunities of the *jagirdars* should be maintained.

The grant of Palamau to Ghansham Singh, the *raja* of Deo in the Gaya district, had been made as a reward for the services that he and his family had rendered on several occasions in quelling disturbances by the turbulent Cheros and Kharwars, and it might have been assumed that he would control them in future. However, the British were disappointed when the people rebelled openly in 1817 in consequence of oppression by the agents whom the *raja* had appointed to collect revenue. In 1818, the British government revoked the deed of the grant and resumed management of the estate. Palamau remained under the British government till 1832 when the great rebellion of the Kols broke out, and the Cheros and Kharwars also rebelled against the British. Throughout Chota Nagpur, the Kols attacked Hindus, Muslims and others who had settled in their villages, drove them from their homes, burnt and plundered their properties and killed a number of them who fell into their hands. The rebellion in Palamau was suppressed after sometime and it remained peaceful till the revolt of 1857.

The population of the Palamau district was chiefly composed of two tribes, the Cheros and the Kharwars, and some Kols and others who took part in the rebellion. The few Brahmans, Rajputs and others were opposed to the insurgents. The Cheros of Palamau had originally come from Kumaon. They established themselves and strengthened their position in the region by conferring *jagirs* on their followers. The Kharwars were also settlers who had originally come from the west hills of Rohtas. They were divided into several clans, the principal being the Bhogtas. This tribe inhabited an elevated plateau between the high lands of Sirguja and the low country of Palamau from which they were further separated by a range of hills and passes.

Two brothers, Nilambar and Pitambar, succeeded to the throne of Palamau chieftaincy in 1850s. They rebelled against the British during the rebellion of 1857 and troubled them till 1859. In the same year, they were defeated and their rebellion was suppressed by the British.

An interesting account of the Cheros and their way of life is available in the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* written around three hundred years after their power had been destroyed. The account, mainly based on family records of the Ujjainias contains interesting information about the Cheros. The Cheros, who lived in forests in torturous conditions, called themselves the original masters of their region and ruled there. Their population was large.[64]

The administration of the state was run in accordance with age-old traditions. One-fourth of the produce was realized and one eight of the forest produces (*anidhan dera*) in kind from the peasants. The rulers did not tax the mango crop or fish. It appears that they took their share of the *mahua* flower. The Cheros did not know counting, therefore, they kept big earthen vessels (*mataka*) filled with pieces of bricks to facilitate it. Transactions (or exchanges) were oral. There were no documents regarding loans. Counting was done by tying knots, small one denoting the advance of loan and big knots, its realization.

The Cheros were good shots and hunters and could even trace tigers from their footprints. No matter how fast the Cheros ran, the arrow did not fall from their guivers (*chillas*). They shot arrows at targets (*kamath*) lying down and could hit wild animals from even 2 to 3 miles away.

Their food consisted of fruits (and probably forest produce, such as tubers) and vegetables, such as *patal kohanra*, which was roasted in fire and eaten with honey. They also consumed the *mahua* flower, and relished wine and the roasted meat of animals.

The Chero men wore the *dhoti*, *mirzai*, vest (*ganji*) and a turban of thick (*mota*) clothes. Their women wore ornaments of *kori* and *ghonghochi*. Men carried a packet of tobacco in their waist, *kamath* and arrows, *khapri* or *kheri*, the Palamau barrel gun, sword (*khanra*), and spear (*tega*) in their hands. Their weaponry included the broad bladed *jamdhar*, *sang ghagra*, *sakhi*, *sama* and axe (*tangi*). They extracted iron from rocks called *lohsan*. They used earthen lamps (*dia*), cooking utensils (*karahi*) and bowls (*katora*).

The Cheros were good devotees of Devi. Important sites of worship were those of Bhagiri Devi in the forests of Jagdishpur, Jarvati Bhavani in the village of Bhalami and Taradevi in the Sahasram hills. These sites were also the centers of fairs in the past. They also worshipped *Koradhangr*.

The Cheros were good hosts. In the hills to the south, the head of the house served *chironji* and roasted meat with their own hands to guests on the first day of their arrival. On the second day, the guests were entertained in the normal course. They usually assembled on a high terrace covered with carpets (*farsh*) made of forest grass.

Different kinds of carpets (*sitalpati* or *ghalicha*) were also made out of sheep hair.

Their marriage customs were interesting. The Cheros and Santhals resided in Palamau and Chota Nagpur. The Cheros were ruled by neither Muslim nor Hindu *rajas*. They never paid any revenue to any foreign power. They manufactured articles of daily consumption and use. They had no contact with outside world or with any foreign power. They were mostly *rajas* in their areas.[65]

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the governors and deputy governors of Bengal and Bihar ruled the *subas* well and carved out their own regional kingdoms. It seems that they subjugated the *zamindars* of Bihar afresh and collected revenue from them, thereby sustaining the Mughal authority in the state.

Palamau was a difficult region as it was full of forests and hills and these difficult regions were assigned to the local chiefs, known as *ghatwals*. They were not paying the revenue to the provincial authority regularly. Therefore, the force was used against them by the authority to collect the revenue. The other officials like the *qanungos* and *jagirdars* did not cooperate in paying their share of revenues to the chieftains of Palamau and, therefore, it was very difficult to administer the Palamau region properly. At the same time, there was economic pressure with a high demand of revenue from the Mughal administration during the first half of the eighteenth century and later on, by the British East India Company when it conquered Bihar.

A characteristic feature of the *zamindars* of Bihar is that they submitted to the Mughals and later, to the British but whenever any rebellion or trouble arose in and around the Bihar *suba*, they also rebelled against the imperial authority. When the British became the masters of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, they began to interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the chieftaincy and appointed their own *diwan* at the court of the *zamindar* who would be the agent of the British East India Company. The Company also introduced a new land settlement through which it auctioned the land of the *zamindars* and a new class of them was brought in from among the highest bidders. Therefore, the British tried to collect the revenue as much as they could. In this way, the *zamindars* were ruined. They were not in a position to pay their arrears and eventually their entire *zamindari* was taken over by the British on the pretext of bad governance and mismanagement.

NOTES

1. Syed Hasan Askari and Qeyamuddin Ahmad, eds., *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. II, pt. I, Patna, KPJRI, 1983, p. 259.

2. The Cheros were a semi-aboriginal or semi-Dravidian tribe who, with the Bhars and Sawars, dominated the province of Bihar, particularly the district of Shahabad, which according to Alexander Cunningham, may be identified with the ancient Kukradesh of the Puranas. Colonel Dalton found their affinity with the people speaking the Mundarian and Kolarian languages. Elliot Dowson considered them a branch of the Bhara tribe (D.L. Drake-Brockman, *Mirzapur a Gazetteer*, Allahabad, Superintendent, Government Press, 1911, vol. XXVII, p. 108). However, Francis Buchanan says that the Cheros belonged to the princes of the Sunaka family who ruled over the Kikat region (Magadha) in the time of Gautama Buddha (Francis Buchanan, *An Account of the District of Shahabad, 1812–13*, Patna, Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1934, p. 40).

3. According to a tradition, a Chero chief killed Mansur Hallaj Shahid, the eldest son of the Sufi saint, Shaikh Qadir Makhdum Owais, in southern Muzaffarpur. It is said that Mansur with his proselytizing zeal had attempted to erect a mosque on the ruins of a mound at Basarh and invited the wrath of the Chero chief. This incident probably took place in the thirteenth century. Traces of the forts and towns of the Chero *rajas* have been found elsewhere in the Chapra and Muzaffarpur districts (Askari and Qeyamuddin, eds., *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, p. 260).

4. See the chapter on the Ujjainias.

5. A part of Chainpur appears to have been occupied by another chief.

6. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 32–3.

7. Abbas Khan Sarwani, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ed. and tr. S.M. Imamuddin, Dacca, University of Dacca, 1964, pp. 127–9, 135–6.

8. Ahmad Yadgar Khan, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, ed. M. Hidayat Hosain, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1939, p. 191. Sarwani, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, p. 76.

9. Rizkullah Mustaqui, *Waqiat-i-Mustaqui*, Rotograph, Dept. of History, AMU, Aligarh, 1929, p. 110.

10. The three great works accomplished by Sher Shah were the destruction of Maharata Chero, the capture and destruction of Raisin, and the reestablishment of Islam in Nagor by the expulsion of Maldeo (Mustaqui, *Waqiat-i-Mustaqui*, p. 110).

11. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Palamau*, vol. IX, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1907, p. 157.

12. Ibid., pp. 2–3, 6–9.

13. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed., Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, p. 418.

14. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga, London, Trübner & Co., 1877, vol. XVI, pp. 455–6.

15.

Askari and Qeyamuddin, eds., *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, p. 269. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Palamau*, pp. 19–20.

16. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, p. 576.

17. Askari and Qeyamuddin, eds., *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, p. 268.

18. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M. Islam Borah, Guwahati, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1936, vol. I, p. 12.

19. Askari and Qeyamuddin, eds., *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, pp. 268–9.

20. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, pp. 28–33.

21. For details see the chapter on the Ujjainias.

22. Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, vol. II, p. 28.

23. Ibid., pp. 27–8.

24. Ibid., pp. 28–9.

25. Ibid., p. 28.

26. Ibid., pp. 28–9.

27. Askari and Qeyamuddin, eds., *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, p. 269.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 270.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 271. Medieval historians call him the son of Balbhadra, which was one of the titles of Medini Rai.

33. The local traditions were collected by L.R. Forbes from the Mowar of Monatu. One of the oldest inhabitants says that in 1627 during the period of Shah Jahan, Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung, the governor of Bihar, made demands upon the Palamau *raja*. He was engaged at the time in settling matters with Pratap Singh Ujjainia, a Rajput chieftain who held considerable territory in Bhojpur. Abdullah Khan dispatched Muazzam Khan, the *raja* of Sasaram, in advance to clear the way and prepare a passage for his troops. After reaching the small stream which lies at the foot of the Bhabulthan or Monatu Pass, Muazzam Khan was challenged by Raja Ghulam Husain, the Rohilla chief of the Kothi fort and a rebel. In the fierce fight that ensued Muazzam was killed and his army was repulsed. There-after, the expedition against Pratap Chero was not taken up by Abdullah Khan. Lahori says that Abdullah Khan did not take up an expedition against Pratap Chero, the son of Balbhadar Chero, because he was

engaged with Pratap Ujjainia, the chief of Bhojpur. The Chero *raja* did not pay any heed to the Mughal governor and did not even pay *peshkash*. The description of Forbes is similar to Lahori's account. We do not find any expedition sent against Pratap Ujjainia during 1627–8. Mirza Rustam Safavi was the governor of Bihar during 1627–8 and not Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung. Raja Pratap Chero succeeded to the throne after the death of his father, Medini Rai, in 1634. So Medini Rai was the Chero *raja* during 1627, not Raja Pratap. It appears that the event which Forbes describes took place in 1637 and not in 1627. (Letter regarding the Mughal invasions of Palamau from L.R. Forbes, Esq. Extra Assistant Commissioner, Palamau, *JASB*, 1871, p. 129–33).

34. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, ed. Kabir al Din Ahmad, Abd al Rahim and W.N. Lees, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1866–72, vol. II, pp. 248–50.

35. Ibid., pp. 248–9.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 249.

38. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. II, p. 250. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, ed. G. Yazdani, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1917, vol. II, pp. 345–6. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahanama*, tr. A.R. Fuller, ed. W.E. Bengly and Z.A. Desai, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 290–1.

39. This is a village situated in the extreme north-east of the district. It contains the remains of an interesting old fort of the Cheros. It was once a flourishing town with fifty-two streets and fifty-three *bazars* (Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Palamau*, vol. IX, pp. 152–3).

40. This is a *mauza* which lies about 10 miles south of Deogan.

41. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. II, p. 358. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahannama*, pp. 290–1. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, vol. II, p. 398.

42. Forbes writes that Tej Rai now changed his mind and was determined to return to his allegiance to Pratap Rai after a prolonged feud with Darya Rai. This fact has got no support in the imperial chronicles (letter regarding the Mughal invasions of Palamau from L.R. Forbes, Esq. Extra Assistant Commissioner, Palamau, *JASB*, 1871, p. 131).

43. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. II, pp. 359–60. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahannama*, pp. 308–9. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, vol. II, p. 398.

44. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. II, pp. 261. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahannama*, p. 309. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, vol. II, 398.

45. Palamau is incomparably less fertile and is smaller in cultivable area. Pratap's heritage had been reduced by the cession of a productive tract in the north-east corner to the Mughals (in 1643) and much of his territory was held on a service tenure, yielding no revenue in cash or grain. Under the British, the current demand of land revenue (1905) was only Rs. 1,09,000 (Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Palamau*, p. 139). In 1643, the gross revenue of Palamau was

to be collected by the *raja* who had to pay nearly half of his income to the paramount power, and could not have possibly maintained himself and his retainers in state, with the balance unless the standard assessment was collected every year without fail, which was never the case in such a primitive and sterile country subject to the calamities of the seasons (Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Calcutta, M.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1916, vol. III, p. 38).

46. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. III, p. 38.

47. For the conquest of Palamau, see Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, ed. Khadim Husain and Abdul Hai, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1865–73, pp. 649–60.

48. Ibid., pp. 648–51. Mohd. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, ed. Agha Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, ASB, 1871, pp. 37–8.

49. Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, pp. 651–3.

50. Muhammad Kazim mentions Loharsi as Narsi (Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, p. 653). H. Blochmann takes it to be Tarhasi-Mangarh, which is not traced out on the map (H. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muham-madan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet, and Palamau', *JASB*, vol. XL, pt. I, 1871, p. 126). It is generally accepted as Loharsi which is 12.5 miles south south-west of Koonda. Kuthi is given in Rennel's map as Kooty (James Rennel, *A Bengal Atlas Containing Maps of the Theatre of War and Commerce on that Side of Hindoostan*, London, the Court of Directors Office, 1781, sheet VIII). The Kuthi fort is situated 6 miles south of Imamganj, at the junction of the Chotko and Morhur rivers (Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. III, pp. 41–2).

51. Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, pp. 653–5.

52. Ibid.

53. 'The Chero Raja's fort, drawn rather elaborately in plan, comes next, and the picture ends in a map of great wooded hills, into which the Raja retreated. The Chero boost is for the most part portrayed, holding its ground, but in sad plight between the hills from which they had been dislodged and the river. The Chero cavalry were evidently posted in the bed of the river, a very respectable body, as well mounted as their foes; but many are galloping up and down the sands of the river in a purposeless manner, some badly wounded. They are all with one or two exceptions of fair complexion and dressed as Hindustanis; and amongst the Chero foot soldiers there are a number of fair-complexioned and well dressed men, showing that in those days, as at present, there was a considerable sprinkling of Aryans amongst the Palamau population. But the majority is black with only a loin cloth, and bare heads and bare feet, bows as above described with only one curve and plenty of arrows, besides which some have spears, and some swords and some shields. The proportion of the matchlock-men to bowmen is small, but even the imperialists are shown to have more of the latter than of the former. The artist has not altogether failed to grasp some of the ethnic characteristics of the Palamau aborigines. The black men have all receding chins and foreheads, and are probably Kharwar (or Cheros). Daud's flank movement was apparently the only piece of strategy employed. Strong as he was in cavalry, he might have easily cut off the retreat of the *raja* to the hills beyond the fort; but seems that his intelligence

department was at fault. It is noticeable that the imperialists did not advance their guns when attacking the second position; they were left at their place and no field artillery was employed.' [W.W. Hunter, *The Statistical Account of Bengal*, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga, London, Trübner & Co., 1877, vol. XVI, pp. 464–8].

54. Jatashankar Jha, *History of Darbhanga Raj*, Patna, KPJRI, 1966, p. 19.

55. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, 'A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th Century by Shitab Rai', PIHC, 22nd Session, Guwahati, 1959, pp. 378–9.

56. Ibid., p. 381.

57. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, 'A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th Century by Raja Shitab Rai', *PIHC*, 22nd Session, Guwahati, 1959, p. 382.

58. Ghulam Husain Khan Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, tr. John Briggs, London, The Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, vol. I, p. 375.

59. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Palamau*, p. 39.

60. Ibid.

61. Yusuf Ali Khan, *Tarikh-i-Mahabatjang*, Patna, Patna University Library, f. 36. Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnama*, ed. Hakim Syed Yusuf Rizvi, Patna, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1998, p. 31. Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, tr., Maulvi Abdus Salam, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1902, p. 353.

62. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Palamau*, p. 40.

63. Ibid., p. 41.

64. In the beginning, their population was large. They indulged in drinking and hunting and how their population decreased. The Cheros were black in complexion, middle sized, rash and ignorant.

65. Askari and Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, Patna, KPJRI, 1983, vol. II, pt. I, pp. 261–2. The Cheros did not depend on pillage and brigandage' for building up their chieftaincy and keeping it going for well above two hundred years; their two surviving magnificent forts, the new fort is a fine piece of architecture and their tributes to the Mughal Emperor, speak for a rather high stage of development and acculturation. The extension of cultivation and the foundation of settlements were twin conditions that were laid down in their areas. They constructed reservoirs (*ahars*) and were particularly good at constructing wells of a large diameter and cylindrical shape, including underground wells (*ba'ulis*), which still survive. The early accounts of Palamau in 1575 describe rich and fertile *tappas*. These constituted the source of the agricultural surplus which the Cheros realized in Shahabad at the rate of one-fourth of the crop produce and one-eighth of the forest produce. They also collected taxes of a few cowries (the Cheros currency and medium of exchange) per village, the customary help (*madad*) from the peasants in kind. They developed markets and fairs in the regions which served as outlets for the product like cotton for the territories extending as far

as Surguja and Mirzapur. The existence of a Chero township and of large colonies of traders and merchants pointed to significant commercial activities (K. Suresh Singh, 'A Study in State Formation among Tribal Communities', in R.S. Sharma and Vivekanand Jha, eds., *Indian Society: Historical Probings, in Memory of D.D.Koshambi*, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1974, pp. 320–1).

CHAPTER 5

The Khokhra Chieftaincy

In the Chota Nagpur region of Jharkhand lay the very important chieftaincy of Khokhra. Abul Fazl, however, locates it between Orissa and the Deccan.[1] Mirza Nathan, the author of *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, calls the entire area of the chieftaincy Khokhradesh.[2] The area under the Khokhra chiefs was very large and it was a region of dense forest and rugged mountains, was almost inaccessible.[3]

Khokhra was ruled by the Nagbanshi dynasty from ancient times and their capital was at Sutiambay[4] under Phani Mukut Rai, their first chieftain. After some time, it was transferred to Chutia[5] and then to Khokhra during 1098–1113.[6] The origin of the Nagbanshi dynasty is shrouded in mystery. It seems that the Nagbanshi of Khokhra originally belonged to the Kawardha region in Madhya Pradesh and after being overthrown by the Gonds during the fourteenth century, they migrated to Chotanagpur where they succeeded in carving out an independent kingdom. Their connection to the Kawardha Nagbanshi is confirmed by the fact that both shared the phani (serpent) symbol.[7] However, as mentioned earlier, the genealogy of the Nagbanshi can be traced back to the first century but their definite history only begins from the fifteenth century.[8]

Phani Mukut Rai, who was the first chief of the Khokhra Raj, claimed to be a kshatriya. However, recent research has established that the Khokhras were Mundas and were adopted into the Nag-bansi tribe by their head, Madra Munda.[9] Phani Mukut Rai is said to have ruled over Bathua, Hazen, Kherswan, Badin, Ramgarh, Changuriah, Gola Palani, and Tori to Mankeri and Burmay.[10] During the historical period, they ruled over more or less the same area.[11] We hardly get any reference to the Khokhras during the period of the Sultans of Delhi. During the Afghan rule, too, the Khokhras are absent from contemporary Persian chronicles. Sher Shah, who had close relations with many of the local chiefs of Bihar, also seems to have had no contact with the Khokhra chiefs. Apparently the main reason for their complete isolation from the authorities who ruled over Bihar was the

remoteness of their principality. None of the ruling dynasties reached those areas.

The Mughal rulers, Babur and Humayun, were not able to establish their hold over Bihar. Humayun had come in contact with some of the local chiefs of Bihar at the time of his contest with Sher Shah, particularly after his defeat at Chausa. But further developments were cut short because of his expulsion from India. After the accession of Akbar, serious attempts were made for the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal empire in India. During the period of the Uzbek revolt, it was found that the rebels were strongly supported by the Afghans of Bihar and a number of local chiefs.* Therefore, after the suppression of the revolt, the emperor sent campaigns to Bihar to expel the Afghans and bring the local chiefs under the subordination of the Mughals.

In the earlier chapters, we have discussed the attempts made by the imperial authority in this direction. In the course of the campaign led by Shahbaz Khan against the Afghans during 1585, the emperor had also asked him to launch an attack on Khokhra.[12] It appears that Madhukar Rai, the ruling Khokhra chief, had refused to accept the overlordship of the Mughals and ignored the imperial authority because, as Abul Fazl writes, as his area was full of forests and mountains, and was not easy to access. Shahbaz Khan marched into the Khokhra region and conquered it. A huge booty fell into his hands. Madhukar Rai submitted to him and agreed to pay *malguzari* (land revenue).[13] No further details of this settlement have been discussed by Abul Fazl. The position he enjoyed vis-à-vis the Mughal administration is not made clear by him. However, in 1590–1, Madhukar Rai was asked to serve in the imperial army along with his retainers.[14] Many Rajput landholders of Bihar, such as Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Rupnarain Sisodiah and others joined Raja Man Singh. Yusuf Khan, the ex-ruler of Kashmir, along with Raja Madhukar Rai and others, led a force into Orissa by way of Jharkhand.[15] They defeated the Afghans, and some of important rebels like Nasib Khan and Jamal Khan, sons of Qatlu and Jalal Khan Khaskhel were captured and handed over to the emperor in 1594. Madhukar Rai played a very important role in this expedition against the Afghans.[16] He appears to have died in 1599 because we get a reference to a new chief of Khokhra, Bairisal, who is said to have visited Delhi and accompanied Emperor Akbar on many of his expeditions. The emperor is said to have been pleased with his heroic deeds and rewarded him with a dress of honour and other valuable gifts.[17] The *pargana* of Sherghati was also conferred on him. After his return from court, Bairisal transferred his capital to Doisa.[18]

Sometime in 1613, Bairisal rebelled. Neither the Persian sources nor

local sources tell us about the cause for the revolt. From a reading of the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, it appears that a campaign was launched against Bairisal because he failed to fulfil the payment of diamonds weighing 30 *misgals* as *peshkash*.[19] The campaign was led by Zafar Khan and he was on the verge of achieving victory when the news of the death of Islam Khan, the governor of Bengal, forced him to make a settlement with the Khokhras so that he could immediately proceed to Jahangirnagar to take charge of Bengal.[20] On his sudden withdrawal from the campaign, the *diwan*, the *bakhshi* and the *waqiya navis* of Bihar send a complaint to the emperor stating that if Zafar Khan had pressed the siege for a few more days, Bairisal would have been completely defeated and the diamonds weighing 30 *misgals* would also have been secure from him as *peshkash*.[21] The emperor was displeased with Zafar Khan, and ordered him to return to Bihar immediately and proceed against the Khokhras without any further delay. Soon after returning to Bihar, Zafar Khan started making preparations to relaunch an attack on the Khokhras but was struck by a serious illness that paralysed half his body and the campaign was given up. On receiving information of this illness, the emperor sent two physicians from his personal staff for his treatment but Zafar Khan could not recover to take up the campaign.[22]

Sometime in 1614, Bairisal died after a rule of fourteen years.[23] He was succeeded by his son, Durjan Sal. It appears that soon after his accession Durjan Sal also continued to defy the imperial authority and did not pay the arrears of *peshkash.* Ibrahim Khan, the governor of Bihar, invaded Khokhra to recover the arrears of tribute. As it was a surprise attack, Durjan Sal was not able to make preparations to defend himself. He was not only completely defeated but also taken prisoner by the imperial army and his chieftaincy was annexed to the Mughal empire (1615).[24] All the diamonds found at Khokhra were sent to the Mughal court.[25] In the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Emperor Jahangir has given an interesting description of this campaign. He writes:

> The third piece of news was the conquest of the province of Khokhra and the acquisition of the diamond mines, which were taken by excellent efforts of Ibrahim Khan. This province is one of the dependencies of the *suba* of Bihar and Patna. There is a river from which they procure diamonds. At the season when there is little water, there are pools and water holes, and it has become known by experience to those who are employed in this work that above every water hole in which there are diamonds, there are crowds of flying animals of the nature of gnats, and which in the language of India they call *jhinga.* Keeping the bed of stream in sight as far as it is accessible; they (the people skilled to procure diamonds) make a collection of stones round the water holes. After this they empty the water holes with spades and shovels to the extent of a yard or 1½ yards and dig up the area. They find among the stones and sand large and small diamonds and bring them out. It occasionally happens that they find a piece of diamond worth Rs. 1,00,000. Briefly, this province and this river were in possession of a *zamindar* of the name of Durjan Sal and

although the governors of the *suba* frequently sent armies against him and went there themselves in consequence of the difficult roads and thickness of the jungles they contended themselves with two or three diamonds and left him in his former condition. When the aforesaid *suba* was transferred from Zafar Khan and Ibrahim Khan was appointed in his place at the time of taking his leave, I ordered him to go and take the province out of the possession of the unknown and insignificant individual. As soon as he arrived in the province of Bihar, he assembled a force and went against that *zamindar*. According to custom, he sent some of his men with a promise to give some diamonds and some elephants but the Khan did not agree to this and entered impetuously into the province. Before the fellow could collect kinsmen he found guides and invaded it. Just when the *zamindar* received this news, the hills and vales that are his abode were beleaguered. Ibrahim Khan sent men to find him and they get hold of him in a cave with several women, one of whom was his mother, while others were also father's wives. They arrested him and also one of his brothers. They searched and took from them the diamonds they had with them. Twenty three male and female elephants also fell into Ibrahim's hands. In reward for this service the *mansab* of Ibrahim Khan was made up to 4000 and he was exalted with the title of Fath Jang. Orders were also given for an increase in the *mansabs* of those who accompanied him on this service and had shown bravery. That province is now in possession of the imperial servants of the state. They carry on work in the bed of the stream and bring to court whatever diamonds are found. A large diamond, the value of which has been estimated at Rs. 50,000 has lately been brought from there. If a little pains are taken, it is probable that good diamonds will be found and be placed in the jewel room.[26]

Raja Durjan Sal was taken to Delhi and then to the Gwalior fort where he was imprisoned for several years. In his memoirs, Jahangir writes, 'Even three years after the conquest of Khokhra, the *zamindar is* still in prison.'[27] Sometimes after, Durjan Sal was freed. The circumstances of his release from prison are discussed in detail by Jahangir:

The diamonds which Ibrahim Khan had brought from Khokhra had been given to the grinders. They were now submitted to me and among them there is one which looks like a sapphire (*nilam*, the same as *nilmani*). I have not seen a diamond of such colour. It weighs several *surkhs (rads)*, and my lapidiaries fix its value at Rs. 3,000, though they would give 20,000 for it, if it were quite white and stood the full test.[28]

Although the jewellers tested the two diamonds that were brought to the emperor, they declared the best of them to be impure and the impure ones to be sound. Therefore, Raja Durjan Sal was recalled from prison to judge the diamonds. He pointed out the flaw and to prove that he was right, he tied the diamonds to the ends of the horns of a ram and made the animal fight with another ram. While the diamond with the flaws split and the *bal* (hair), became apparent, the other diamond remained intact. The emperor was so pleased that he pardoned Raja Durjan Sal and released him.[29] Durjan Sal begged that the other *rajas* who had been confined in the Gwalior fort along with him should also be released. He requested that his former position be restored to him, including the right to sit on a chair in the presence of

the emperor. These requests were fulfilled. Blochmann, quoting family records, adds that the *raja* of Khokhra agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 6,000 and the title of 'Shah' was also conferred on him.[30]

During the absence of Durjan Sal from Khokhra, one of his relatives* had captured the throne of the chieftaincy, although the overall control of the region continued to be exercised by the imperial officers. It seems that the occupant of the Chota Nagpur chieftaincy's throne developed hostility with the Mughals. As a result, Ahmed Beg Khan, the nephew of Ibrahim Khan Fath Jang and the deputy governor of the Orissa *subs*, attacked the Khokhra *zamindar* in 1624.[31] But it seems that the Mughals could not mobilize an effective army against him and, therefore, could not remove him from the throne.[32]

After his release from prison in 1627, Raja Durjan Sal came to Khokhra, launched an attack to expel the usurper and succeeded in re-establishing himself in his lost position. In the fight, he was assisted by one of the *rajas* who had accompanied him from Gwalior. Durjan Sal turned his capital, Doisa, into a magnificent fort-city and tried to consolidate his administration.[33] Attracted by the land assignments given by him, many individuals and communities flocked to Chota Nagpur. Subsequently, the Nagbanshi rulers, unlike the Cheros, maintained cordial relations with the Mughals.[34]

Interestingly, after Durjan Sal, we get practically no reference to any other Khokhra chief in any of the contemporary or later sources. They are not referred to in the period of Emperor Shah Jahan or Aurangzeb. In the earlier chapters, we have seen that in the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan a number of *zamindars* of Bihar sided with one or the other prince but even during this campaign, the Khokhras are nowhere to be found.

According to local tradition, Durjan Sal died in 1640 and was succeeded by Ram Shah who ruled from 1640 to 1665. We do not find any reference to Raja Rain Shah in the Mughal chronicles. He was succeeded by his son, Raghunath Shah, in 1665.[35] Raghu-nath Shah's name figures in a temple inscription at Chutia as the fiftieth descendant of Raja Phani Mukut Rai.[36] The Khokhra chieftaincy, however, became fairly important by the end of the century. It appears that a number of temples were constructed during the reigns of Ram Shah and Raghunath Shah in Chota Nagpur.[37]

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a French traveller, mentions that the Mughals invaded the Khokhra chieftaincy during the reign of Raja Ram Shah but his record of this event is not clear. However, he notes that Ram Shah regained his *zamindari* after the payment of *peshkash* to the Mughals.[38]

Lal Pradumn Singh in his book, the *Nagvansh*, mentions that Chota Nagpur was attacked by the Mughals during the reign of Raja

Raghunath Shah. Mughal officers were sent by Aurangzeb to attack Khokhra during the early reign of the *raja.* The invasion was strongly resisted, which led to the defeat and death of the imperial officers.[39] But we do not find any description about this important historical fact in the Mughal Persian chronicles. According to the Chero tradition, Khokhra was invaded by Medini Rai, the Chero chief of Palamau, during the rule of Raja Raghunath Shah. Medini Rai ransacked Doisa, the capital of the Khokhra chief and carried away a huge booty. It is said that he took away a huge stone gate from Doisa and used it in the new Palamau fort. This gate is still known as the Nagpur gate. It is also possible that the gate of the new Palamau fort was given its name simply to commemorate the conquest of Chota Nagpur by Medini Rai.[40] It appears that the relations between Raghunath Shah and Emperor Aurangzeb remained cordial. However, some portions of the Nag-banshi territories were included in the territory of the Orissa province. The revenue of this portion was paid to the royal treasury through the Mughal revenue officers of Orissa [41] In 1692, Raja Raghunath Shah paid a total revenue of Rs. 9,705 to the Mughals.[42] He ruled till 1706 and died during the same year.[43] Raja Raghunath Shah was succeeded by Yadunath Shah who ruled from 1706 to 1724.[44] Shitab Rai mentions him as Nagbanshi Singh.[45]

In 1719, during the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah (the son of Jahandar Shah), Sarbuland Khan was appointed the *subedar* of Bihar province and ruled for seven years. He first settled the *parganas* of Sher and Sherghatty under Irja Agoury, the son of Sulehman *qanungo.* The latter left his *amil* there and proceeded with Sarbuland Khan towards the hills. Raja Nagbanshi Singh, the *zamindar* of Nagpur, to whom the ghatwals of Palamau, Ramgarh and Badam[46] were subjects, sent Bedman Das Thakur, his agent, through the mediation of Irja Agoury, to wait upon the *subedar* and agreed to pay a *nazrana* (present) of Rs. 1 lakh of which Rs. 45,000 was to be paid in kind and the rest in diamonds. After he paid it, the Mughal troops were recalled.[47] After this Mughal invasion, Raja Nagbanshi Singh perhaps realized the weakness of Doisa from the defence point of view as it was easily accessible to the Mughals. Therefore, he shifted his capital from Doisa to Palkot.[48] Nagbanshi Singh (Yadunath Shah) died in 1724. He had twelve sons and was succeeded by his eldest one, Shivnath Shah, who ruled from 1724 to 1733.[49] We do not have accounts of the first six years of Raja Shivnath Shah's reign. It seems that he did not pay the *peshkash* to the Mughals and, therefore, his chieftaincy was invaded by them. Fakhr-ud-Daula, the *subedar* of Bihar, invaded the Khokhra chieftaincy though the route of Kunda in 1731.[50] He faced considerable resistance from the *raja* of Khokhra but both parties finally compromised.[51] The *subedar* received Rs. 12,000

from the ghatwals of Ramgarh on account of the Nagpur *raja*[52] and Rs. 5,000 from the ghatwals of Palamau.[53] When Fakhr-ud-Daula was removed from the post of governor of the Bihar *suba* in 1733, the Khokhra chief discontinued the payment of tribute to the Mughals.[54] Raja Shivnath Shah died in 1733 and was succeeded by Udainath Shah who reigned till 1740.[55] During the eighteenth century, Mughal court politics and factions led to the weakening of effective control of the Mughal imperial authority in the provinces. The accession of Muhammad Shah Rangeela in Delhi in 1719, the pleasure-loving emperor who did not take much interest in administration, led to loss of imperial control over local administration. There were many *zamindars* of Bihar who became defiant during this period.[56] Udainath Shah also adopted a defiant attitude towards the nawab of Bengal.[57] A1ivardi Khan was appointed the deputy governor of Bihar by Nawab Shujauddin in 1733.[58] He was determined to suppress the rebel *zamindars* of Bihar, and establish peace and order in the province. In 1735, Alivardi Khan led an expedition against Sunder Singh of Tekari in the Gaya district. The house of Tekari had risen to power. Sunder Singh had defeated Faizullah, the *faujdar*of the district of Somnut (in the Gaya district), and killed him. When Mustafa Khan, the son of Faizullah, took on his position, he was also killed. Alivardi Khan's expedition resulted in Sunder Singh being imprisoned but his family escaped and took shelter in Chatra, which had a strong fort.[59] At the approach of the pursuing party under Hedayat Ali Khan, they abandoned the fort and fled. The fort was destroyed.[60] Later on, Sunder Singh was reassigned the chieftaincy of Tekari. Raja Bishun Singh of Ramgarh also agreed to pay tribute.[61] Alivardi Khan was able to bring many refractory *zamindars* of Bihar under his control and forced them to clear their revenue arrears. Udainath Shah also cleared arrears that were due since 1733. During 1735–40, Bishun Singh of Ramgarh again withheld his tribute. Udainath Shah of Khokhra had paid his tribute through Bishun Singh of Ramgarh but the latter had withheld the payment to the provincial authority.[62] In 1740, Haibat Jang was appointed as the deputy governor of Bihar. He sent Hedayat Ali Khan against Bishun Singh of Ramgarh, assisted by Sundar Singh of Tekari and other *zamindars* of the region. Bishun Singh was defeated and cleared the arrears of previous years through the payment of Rs. 80,000. It appears that Rs. 5,000 was paid by the ghatwal of Palamau and Rs. 12,000 by Raja Bishun Singh on account of Ramgarh. This was paid after a gap of one year and the revenue ever since continued to be paid to the provincial authority in the same manner.[63]

Udainath Shah died in 1740 and was succeeded by his younger brother, Shyam Sunder Nath Shah. Shyam Sundar could not survive

for long and only ruled for a few months.[64] After his death, his brother, Balram Shah, succeeded to the throne in the same year.[65] This was the period when Maratha inroads began in the region. It is reported that the Marathas crossed several times through the territory of the Khokhra chieftaincy on their way to and from Bengal. Bhaskar Pandit, a commander of Raghuji Bhonsle, had entered Chota Nagpur through Chhattisgarh on his way to Bengal.[66] Perhaps the Marathas wanted to conquer the Rajput dynasty of Chhattisgarh to whom the Khokhra, Surguja and Singhbhum chieftaincies owed allegiance during 1741.[67] The Marathas fell upon the district of Panchet and plundered it. However, in October 1742, the Marathas under Bhaskar Pandit were defeated by Alivardi Khan at Katwa.

In 1743, Raghuji Bhonsle invaded Bengal with a large army through the same route that was earlier followed by Bhaskar Pandit. The continuous invasion and plunder of the Bihar *suba* led to the establishment of their sphere of influence over many regions like Tekari, Bhojpur and Chota Nagpur. The Khokhra chieftaincy became subject to Maratha extortions and plunder.[68]

Balram Shah's reign lasted three years. He died in 1743 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Mani Nath Shah, who ruled till 1757. After this period, the provincial control over the Khokhra chieftaincy weakened. Mani Nath Shah consolidated his authority over the petty estates of Bundu, Silli, Burwa, Rahe and Tamar, and they were compelled to acknowledge the Nagbanshi ruler as their chief.[69]

Mani Nath Shah was succeeded by Drip Nath Shah, son of Nrip Nath Shah and cousin of Mani Nath Shah.[70] He ruled for twenty-nine or thirty years. During his reign, a major change occurred in eastern India. The British East India Company fought two important battles, the Battle of Plassey and the Battle of Buxar against the Indian rulers, which led to the establishment of British supremacy in eastern India. In 1765, Mohammad Reza Khan, the *naib nazim* of Bengal, raided the Khokhra chieftaincy but we do not have much information about what happened after this raid. It seems that the chief of Khokhra had withdrawn his subordination to the deputy *nazim* of the Bengal and Bihar *suba*. It is reported that the chieftains of Khokhra, Palamau, Ramgarh and Kharakdiha began to make raids in neighbouring territories. The Birbhum district, for instance, maintained troops to guard its frontiers from inroads by these chiefs.[71]

The British East India Company now began to conquer the chieftaincies of Bihar. In 1767, Ensign Fergusson, entering hilly and forested areas, brought the zamindars of Ramgarh, Samkakulia (Lalgarh), Jambani and Jatbani (Silda) under control.[72] In the same year, the British officer, Captain Jacob Camac conquered Kharakdiha and Palamau, and the British entered the Chota Nagpur region in

1772.[73] Raja Drip Nath Shah had extended the boundaries of the Khokhra chieftaincy to the territory constituting the present Ranchi district.[74]

There was a tussle between the Khokhra chief and the Laraka Kols of the Kolhan region in Singhbhum during 1769. Drip Nath Shah attacked Kolhan with 20,000 soldiers but the Larakas were enough powerful to drive him back. The *raja* of Singhbhum is supposed to have assisted the Khokhra chief during this raid. However, the Larakas slaughtered several soldiers of the Khokhra chief.[75]

The chief of Khokhra made another attempt to subdue the Kolhan region in 1770. In this battle, hundreds of his men were slaughtered and a large number of them died of thirst during the retreat because it was the hot month of May. The Larakas pursued the Nagbanshi troops until they entered their own territory. The Larakas retaliated by making incursions into the Nagbanshi territories. They invaded Sonepur, Belsia and Basia, the regions of the Khokhra chieftaincy,[76] and ravaged and plundered them for several years. Many villages were depopulated and the southern parts of the Nagbanshi kingdom remained disturbed due to continuous inroads by the Larakas. Drip Nath Shah faced another difficulty in the hostile attitude of Muchchun Singh, the ruler of Ramgarh. For some time, the Nagbanshis had been paying revenue to the Mughals through the chiefs of Ramgarh. Muchchun Singh attacked and plundered the Khokhra chieftaincy on the pretext of realizing the revenue arrears.

Raja Drip Nath Shah, probably compelled by these troubles and circumstances, developed friendly relations with the British East India Company. He actively supported the Captain Camac in his expedition against the Palamau chieftaincy. His difficulties were minimized with the timely assistance of the Raja of Khokhra.[77] The British recognized his valuable services and gave him protection from Marathas incursion into his chieftaincy. Raja Drip Nath Shah's request for the direct payment of revenue to the British government was accepted.[78] The Patna Provincial Council of the British government fixed the payment of *malguzari* for the Khokhra chief to the British at the rate of Rs. 12,000 per annum for three years. Raja Drip Nath Shah received a *khilat* from the Patna Council and a *parwana* from Raja Shitab Rai, the *naib diwan* of the East India Company. The *malguzari* subsequently rose to Rs. 14,100 and then to Rs. 15,041. The *raja* of Chota Nagpur became a full-fledged tributary chief.[79] The Khokhra chief faced hardships due to the increase of the *malguzari* and it seems that he was not paying the revenue regularly to the Company.

In 1778, Captain Ramus, the collector of Ramgarh, visited the chieftaincy with the intention to pressurize him to pay the revenue demand of the Company. But the *raja* refused to meet him as he had a

bad experience with the British.[80] In one of his meetings with Captain Camac, Raja Drip Nath Shah was wearing a jewelled turban of great value. Captain Camac asked him to exchange headdresses with him and the Raja was so angry at being deprived of his precious jewel that he decided not to meet the British representative again.[81] He had also not cleared the arrears of revenue for a long period.

The Khokhra chieftaincy now faced an economic crisis, and the continuous Maratha invasions and plunder of the Chota Nagpur territory further damaged its capacity and capability. The *raja* of Sirguja had also raided the chieftaincy. The Khokhra chief had also developed enmity with the *raja* of Ramgarh. The British did not give protection to him any more against the Maratha invasions. Instead, they pressurized him to pay an exorbitant amount of revenue to them, which he was unable to do.

Between 1795 and 1800, the Marathas invaded Chota Nagpur savagely and looted, plundered and destroyed *parganas* and the villages of the Khokhra region. They collected revenue from the villagers forcefully and also killed the inhabitants of the villages.[82]

However, the British government stationed military forces at Chota Nagpur to check the incursions of the Marathas. It appears that after 1800, the raids of the Marathas in and around the Khokhra chieftaincy reduced. It seems that the stationing of sepoys at Chota Nagpur and raising the matter of the Marathas invasions of Chota Nagpur in the Maratha court checked their raids. At the same time, the Marathas power and position were curtailed by the British East India Company in around 1800, and they were totally defeated by the British during 1818–19.

During 1766–1800, the tribes of Chota Nagpur rebelled against the British. These tribes were known as Chuars, a Bengali word that means brigand.[83] Their rebellion disturbed the Chota Nagpur chieftaincy. We find reference to the *zamindar* of Phulkusuma, Damodar Singh and several others *zamindars* of the forest areas of Tamar in Chota Nagpur who rebelled and plundered the entire region. The British had interfered in their territories and had curtailed their rights over the forest resources, which had been exercised by them since the ancient period. They also felt threatened when the British tried to educate and civilize them. The Chuars of Tamar regions were freedom-loving people and the British not only interfered in their day-to-day lives but also imposed a revenue burden on them. The British determination to realize the revenue from these tribes compelled them to rebel. The Chuars created a lot of difficulty and trouble in the Khokhra chieftaincy. Sometimes they burnt villages and sometimes they plundered them and killed their inhabitants. The British suppressed their rebellion by the end of the eighteenth century but

many of their main leaders were never subjugated.

Drip Nath Shah and his successor, Deo Nath Shahi, the Khokhra chiefs, were silent during the rebellion of the Chuars. They took advantage of the rebellion and disturbance in the Chota Nagpur region and stopped paying revenue to the British. At the invitation of Hari Ram Shahi, the *raja* of Burwa, a party of Marathas consisting of five hundred horsemen and an equal number of *burkandezes* (civil guards or armed policemen), had entered the chieftaincy of Deo Nath Shahi and plundered his *parganas* and killed a number of his ryots.[84] The *raja* could not do anything to check the invaders. He appealed to the British for help but despite the latter's best efforts; they could not stop the Marathas. Deo Nath Shahi sustained heavy losses on account of this raid. He pled his inability to pay the arrears of revenue to the British.[85] William Hunter, the Judge-Collector of Zila Ramgarh, proposed the sale of Deo Nath Shahi's land. The Board of Revenue at Calcutta did not think this advisable and directed Hunter to inform Deo Nath Shahi that he would incur the displeasure of the government if he did not discharge the public revenue regularly.[86] The Board of Revenue at Calcutta asked Hunter to remind Raja Deo Nath Shahi for the payment of the arrears without paying any interest on it.[87] In January 1800, the *zamindars* of Sirguja, a Maratha chief, invaded the Burwa region and prevented Deo Nath Shahi from paying his revenue to the British. Therefore, Hunter, the Collector of Ramgarh proposed to depute a team of soldiers to Palkote, the headquarters of the Khokhra chief, to ensure the security of the treasury.[88] The Marathas continued to plunder and loot the Khokhra chieftaincy during the month of February 1800.[89]

In April 1800, the Collectorship of the Ramgarh hill tract was abolished and the Collector of Bihar was placed in charge of the revenue administration of the Ramgarh district as well. The new board estimated the loss suffered by the Khokhra chieftaincy from the incursions of the Marathas. They granted a revenue relaxation of Rs. 1,500 to Deo Nath Shahi in July 1801.[90] Hari Ram Shahi, the *raja* of Burwa, had not yet submitted to the authority of the Nagbanshi overlord. He was now compelled by the British to submit and visit Raja Deo Nath Shahi at Palkote. However, on his way to Palkote, he was murdered by the party attending to him and who had been sent by Deo Nath Shahi for his treacherous murder. No judicial enquiry was made.

During 1803–5, Raja Deo Nath Shahi did not pay revenue and withheld the arrears.[91] He died in 1806 leaving behind three sons: Govind Nath Shah, Gopi Nath Shah and Vishwa Nath Shah. The British recognized Govind Nath Shah as the *raja* of Khokhra and he ruled till 1822.[92] When his brothers claimed their share of the

Khokhra chieftaincy, Govind Nath Shah dispossessed them and they complained to the British. In the meantime, the *diwan* of the Raja, Din Dayal, became powerful and took all the administrative affairs of the chieftaincy into his own hands. He removed some of the subordinate tenure-holders of the Khokhra chieftaincy who also complained to the British government. Din Dayal had become arrogant. The British troops marched into the chieftaincy in 1808. Din Dayal and his supporters fled to Calcutta where they were arrested and sent back to Chatra. Soon after, Raja Govind Nath Shah became loyal to the British. He agreed to pay all the arrears of revenue and stationed the British troops at his headquarters. With this, he came under the direct control of the Magistrate of Ramgarh. The *raja* had to bear the expenditure of the troops posted in his capital. He cleared the arrears of revenue amounting to Rs. 35,000, and the dispute between him and his brothers was rettled.[93] In August 1809, the British granted a *khilat* to Raja Govind Nath Shah, and assured him of their favour and protection as long as he remained loyal to thern.[94] As a police station was established in the Khokhra chieftaincy, many *darogas* (sub-inspectors), *sipahis* (policemen), *chowkidars* (night watchmen) and others were appointed and posted to the Chotanagpur chieftaincy.[95] The tribes of Chota Nagpur, especially the Mundas and Oraons, resented this step of the British during 1811–12. The centre of their rebel uprising was in the region of Nawagarh and their leader was Baidya Nath Shahi, a *jagirdar* of Nawagarh. He carried on raids into the Burwa and Jashpur regions, and plundered several villages. In the beginning, the British were not successful against the rebels and a huge battalion was mobilized against them. The troops arrived in Nawagarh on 24 March 1812. They attacked the stronghold of Baidya Nath Shahi but he managed to escape to Surguja.[96] After his expulsion, the major disturbances came to an end but some cases of loot and plunder continued to occur till the end of 1812.

Raja Govind Nath Shah stopped paying revenue on the pretext of tribal rebellions in the region. He was still in arrears during 1813–14. As a result the *amin*, Muhammad Ali, visited him to assess the revenue of the chieftaincy of Khokhra in order to collect it. However, the *raja* made a promise in June 1814 to clear the total arrears by installments within four months. After this promise, the *amin* and his establishment were withdrawn. But the *raja failed* to keep his promise due to the unwillingness of his subordinate *jagirdars* and *zamindars* to pay their revenue. Govind Nath Shah requested Thomas Campbell Robertson, the Assistant Collector of Ramgarh, to depute an *amin* for the purpose of attaching the estates of Tamar and Barkagarh who had not yet paid their share of revenue. Robertson, however, failed to take any immediate action against Govind Shahi of Tamar and Lal Raghunath

Shah of Barkagarh. The situation remained unchanged for Raja Govind Nath Shah as he was still in arrears of revenue till 1817.[97] Relations between him and the British were further strained as the latter levied the taxes of *sayer* and *randari* on *raja* which he was unable to pay. Thus, in 1817, Chota Nagpur was brought under the direct administration of the East India Company as a part of the Ramgarh district.[98] The *raja* was deprived of his position as a tributary chief.[99] This is significant in the history of the Khokhra chieftaincy as the independent authority of the Nagbanshi rulers came to an end by 1817.[100] After this, the British made a few administrative changes. The Collectorate of Ramgarh was removed from the jurisdiction of the Board of Revenue at Calcutta and placed under the Bihar and Benares Board of Commissioners.[101]

When the British Company took over the administration of Chota Nagpur, it appointed various officers or bureaucrats. These officers were alien to this region and ignorant of the local language, culture and customs of the tribal people of Chota Nagpur. The basic cause of the civil disturbances here was the absence of proper contact and understanding between the tribes and the government, a situation which was very often exploited by the big tenure-holders to their own advantage. The immediate cause of the rebellion was an incident that took place in 1818. A religious person, Narain Bhatta Brahmachari, convinced Raja Govind Nath Shah that an old woman, Adhar Dai, had killed his children by witchcraft. Based on this suspicion, Adhar Dai and her family were murdered by the troops (*barkandazes*) of the Chota Nagpur *raja* who were non-tribals. This act made the tribals violent and they rebelled during 1819–20. They collected around 5,000 men armed with matchlocks, bows and arrows and attacked Purana Nagar in August 1819.[102] They plundered it and burnt some houses of a village named Pitupara. They also plundered Tamar. Raja Govind Nath Shah appealed to E. Roughsedge, the Governor-General, for urgent help but he did not take this seriously.

The disturbance became serious and, therefore, George French, the Magistrate of Raurgarh, requested Roughsedge to send troops to suppress the rebels of Tamar.[103] The Governor-General sent A.J. Calvin, the Magistrate of the Jungle Mahals, to Tamar but he did not get much success in suppressing the rebels. The latter continued to ravage Tamar and even its *zamindar* was unable to protect the ryots of his *zamindari*. Roughsedge again dispatched a party of forty matchlock men under the command of Jamdar Shaikh Inayatullah on 20 November 1819. He was ordered to protect the family of Raja Govind Nath Shah and save Tamar from the ravages of the insurgents. On their arrival in the Chota Nagpur region, the rebels attacked them from three sides but were repulsed without much difficulty. In this

skirmish, the leader of Raja Govind Nath Shah's troop was wounded. Inayatullah was successful in driving the rebels out into the forest. However, they reappeared on 1 December 1819 with their number increased to 2,000. They occupied a village very close to the *raja's* residence. Raja Govind Nath Shah sent his men against them but they could not succeed. The rebels took up their position in Purana Nagar. Govind Nath Shah soon realized that he could not drive the rebels from his locality. They had become very powerful and it was difficult to control them. The Chuars became more violent and surrounded and set fire to a village named Lungtu. Govind Nath Shah took help from Inayatullah who with great difficulty was able to compel the insurgents to flee into the forest. However, the success was temporary.[104] In fact, by the end of December 1819, the insurgents had assumed the nature of a popular rising against Raja Govind Nath Shah.[105] Roughsedge, the Governor-General, rushed to Tamar and engaged himself in suppressing the rebels. A.J. Calvin was already there and the joint determination of these two officers considerably reduced the enthusiasm of the insurgents. By the first week of January 1820, the rebels were defeated and pushed back to take refuge in the forest. A number of insurgent leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Two leaders, Rughdeo and Kunta, could not be captured and continued their rebellion in the Tamar region. Roughsedge made arrangements to capture them. He also appealed to the border *zamindars* of Singhbhum to arrest the two. Rughdeo was arrested in July 1820 through the assistance of Kunwar Bikram Singh of Saraikela.[106]

Another rebel leader, Kunta, fermented discontent for some time in Tamar but he was also arrested and sent to Midnapur, then to Ramgarh.[107] The troubles of Tamar ended but disturbances in Chota Nagpur continued. The rebels, the Larka Kols, ravaged and plundered villages till April 1821.[108] By the end of April, though, the rebels were defeated and their rebellion was suppressed. They were forced to take shelter in the inaccessible hills of Chota Nagpur.[109] On Roughsedge's recommendation, all hostilities were suspended and most of the rebel leaders submitted by the end of May 1821.[110] Thus, peace was restored in the Chota Nagpur chieftaincy.[111] In 1822, Raja Govind Nath Shah died and his son, Raja Jagannath Shah Deo, succeeded to the throne.[112] He was critical of the tribes of Chota Nagpur. In one of his petitions to the government during the unrest of 1832, he described the tribes as low castes who 'in person resemble man, but in mind wild beast'.[113]

It seems that Jagannath Shah Deo was extravagant and could not manage the economy of the chieftaincy. He incurred huge debts with the Sikh horse-dealers and Muslim cloth merchants, and, therefore,

leased out villages to *thikadars* to collect taxes for a specified time. These *thikadars* extorted the villagers by violence and fraud. They tried to squeeze as much tax as possible from the ryots in the form of rents, *abwabs, salamis*, etc. They had hardly any interest in the welfare of the tribal people.[114] Thus, the tribes suffered exploitation by the *thikadars* as well as by the *raja* of Chotanagpur. The immediate cause of this rebellion was that Harnath Shahi, the younger brother of the Nagbanshi *raja*, Jagannath Shah Deo, had assigned some villages in Sonepur to the *thikadars.* The latter deprived the Mankis and the Munda tribes of Sonepur of their ancestral properties.[115] They not only forcefully captured their land but also seduced the women. The Mundas and the Mankis could not bear this oppression and rebelled against the outsiders (Dikkus). They attacked the *thikadars* and the *dikkus*, burnt their villages, plundered and looted their houses and killed them.

The rebellion began on 11 December 1831 in Sonepur. It was mainly against outsiders who had settled down in Chota Nagpur and who were oppressing the local people. The Kol tribes forcibly took away two hundred cattle from the villages of Kolhang and Kumang. They also attacked a few other villages of the Sonepur *pargana* and plundered and burnt them. The rebels got popular support very soon. The rebellion spread like wildfire and within a very short period, the many people joined the rebels.[116] Some joined them due to the fear of social boycott; some found it a good opportunity to plunder and loot. A majority of the tribes' people joined because their leaders appealed to them to do so.[117]

The Chota Nagpur authority was unprepared of sudden rebellion of the tribes. The Ramgarh battalions were lesser in number and could not control the rebels. One of the soldiers (*barkandazes*) was killed and fourteen men of Kunwar, the *zamindar* of Govindpur, were wounded by the rebels. On 25 December 1831, 300 tribal people attacked the villages of Gassu and Ramjeri, and plundered and burnt the whole region. On 2 January 1832, they attacked the neighbouring village of Koru Buru. On 3 January, they plundered the village of Gangira and murdered the *thikadar*, Jafar Ali along with his concubine a Kol woman and two children, along with several of other his dependants.

All the local forces like the *daroga*, Karim Ali and the *zamindars* of the area, including *raja* of Chota Nagpur, the *nazir* of Sherghati, and the *zamindar* Kunwar of Govindpur used their forces to suppress the rebels but they could not succeed. Only one of the rebel leaders, Baijnath Manki, was arrested but this added further fuel to the fire. Their numbers increased to 4,000 and they posed a great threat to the *dikkus* who fled from Chota Nagpur. The rebels plundered Govindpur and the *parganas* of Benkudra.[118] They drove the foreigners from their

houses, and plundered and burnt their property. They also murdered many of them in revenge and hatred. It appears that by 26 January 1832, the tribal rebels got complete possession of Chota Nagpur with the exception of some of the hilly tracts to the south of Palkote; Palkote Khas (the residence of the Nagvanshi *raja*) and the villages of the *pargana*, and Bussea, Pithoria and adjoining villages in the north-east corner.

The British East India Company under Captain Wilkinson realised the serious problem in Chota Nagpur. Wilkinson tried to suppress the rebellion but achieved little success. The British forces were very few in and around Chota Nagpur. Wilkinson asked for cavalry forces from Varanasi. The local forces were also mobilized against the insurgents. In the meantime, the rebellion had spread to the five *parganas* of Tamar, Rahe, Bundu, Silli and Baranda.[119] These were the dependencies of the Chota Nagpur *raja.* The rebels first attacked Bundu, and the *raja* was surprised to find that his loyal Mundas and Mankis had deserted him. He fled with his family to Jhalda in the Jungle Mahals. The houses of the non-tribals were destroyed. However, the rebels spared the *raja's* house to show their respect for him.

Thus, almost all of Chota Nagpur and its five dependencies were at the mercy of the insurgents. Wilkinson could not do much to suppress them. However, troops from outside began to arrive in Chota Nagpur. Raja Mitrajit Singh of Tekari supplied 300 *barkandazes* with 200 cavalry; his nephew, Bishun Singh, supplied 70 cavalry and 150 *barkandazes*, and Raja Khan Bahadur Khan also joined with his 200 men. For the conveyance of supplies 250 oxen were kept ready. The Bengal government also sent some important detachments to suppress the rebellion.

After a prolong effort, Wilkinson, with the help of Captain Impel and the available forces, succeeded in establishing order in the region. The British tried to develop a good rapport and friendship with the tribal people. At the same time, they pressed hard to suppress the rebellion and arrested many important tribal leaders. In this way, the Kols, Larkas, Mundas and Mankis were subdued by 1836.

After the suppression of this rebellion, the British government tried to find the various causative factors. They found that the Hindus who were mostly traders and moneylenders earned enormous profit from the tribes by misusing their power and position, while the Muslims levied usurious rates of interest. The tribes were mostly ignorant people and they were exploited by the *dikkus* (outsiders, both Hindus & Muslims) who were backed by the police and the British court. These were the conditions which ultimately compelled the tribes of Chota Nagpur to rebel against authority.[120]

The British now took some measures to establish an effective administration in Chota Nagpur. Police stations were established at different places like Palkote, Govindpur, Bundu, Tamar, Silli, Barway and Banta Hajam. In 1842, the administrative headquarters were transferred from Lohardaga to Ranchi. Many administrative changes were introduced in Chota Nagpur. But the result was far from satisfactory. The *jagirdars* and *thikadars* were active in breaking the tribal land system, and reducing these original holders of the villages to wielders of the plough.[121]

The Nagbanshi *raja* had vassals in the *zamindaris* of Tamar, Bundu, Rahe, Baranda, Silli and Barway. These vassal *rajas* and the *raja* himself went on creating vested interests in the shape of a series of political hirelings who were given large gifts of land. These were Rajputs and other warrior classes who did military service for the *rajas* and in return, enjoyed vast land grants. Many people gradually entered Chota Nagpur and consolidated their positions there. The *raja* of Chota Nagpur acted as the *daroga* at Palkote and the other *rajas* exercised the same powers at their respective headquarters. The British government was also responsible for increasing the rents in the region. The tribal people were forced to work as *begari* (voluntary commutation of services), on the agricultural lands of the *zamindars.* Another means of exploiting the tribes was the *Kamiauti* system by which two or three generations had to provide free labour for the debt of a few rupees.

Another important development took place in 1845 when the Christian missionaries arrived in Ranchi. They totally exerted themselves for the cause of the tribes. They imparted education among the tribes and became popular in the region. Many tribal people converted to Christianity. But it seems that there were mixed reactions to the missionaries. Many tribal people thought that they were posing a threat to their culture, religion and tradition to which they were very strongly affiliated. Therefore, when the revolt of 1857 occurred, the tribal people attacked the Christian missionaries, too. The latter fled to save their lives. The rebels who were generally peasants and sepoys burnt the officers' bungalows.

The rebels received very little support from the civil population in Ranchi. Most of the *zamindars* like the Nagbanshis stood with the British government. However, a few of them rebelled against the latter and one of them was Pandey Ganpat Rai of Bhaunro, an *ex-diwan* of the Nagbanshi *raja* of Chota Nagpur. He was the zamindar of eleven villages and was liked by his people. People often sung, *'pandey ganpat rai raj chaleye, praja sukhari* (as long Pandey Ganpat Rai ruled, the people be happy)'.[122] Pandey Ganpat Rai participated in the rebellion of 1857. The *raja* of Ramgarh played an important role in reoccupying

the district of Chota Nagpur speedily.[123] The Nagbanshi *raja* of Chota Nagpur and many other *zamindars* had different opinions about the landless labourers (mostly tribal people). However, Thakur Biswanath Sahi, a Nag-banshi *raja*, joined the sepoys, along with Jamdar Jai Mangal Singh and Madhu Singh, and guided them.[124]

Thakur Bishwanath Sahi was chosen the chief of the sepoys and Pandey Ganpat Rai the commander-in-chief.[125] But these people could not maintain unity among themselves. They created trouble for the British government in some areas and finally reached Chatra. The British now took action under Commissioner E.T. Dalton. Thakur Bishwanath Sahi and Pandey Ganpat Rai were captured at Kakarang Ghat, near Lohardaga with the assistance of Mahesh Narain Sahi, the *zamindar* of Lohardaga.[126] They were tried by the Judicial Commissioner and hanged on one of the trees to the north of the old Commissioner's Compound at the gate of the Ranchi Zila School. The date of the hanging of the Nagbanshi Thakur was on 16 April 1858.[127]At the time, he was forty years old. His ninety-nine villages had been confiscated in December 1857. Pandey Ganpat Rai was hanged on 21 April 1858.[128] The insurgents who moved from Ranchi to Chatra were brutally mowed down. The British authority re-established its hold in Chota Nagpur. The entire property of the Khokhra chieftaincy was confiscated after the suppression of the rebellion.

We find a reference to Raja Jagannath Shandeo, the fifty-ninth Nagbanshi ruler of Chota Nagpur who had no son. Lal Upendra Nath Shandeo, older son of Srinath Shandeo (the brother of Raja Jagannath Shandeo), was looking after the affairs of the chieftaincy. He was expecting to succeed to the throne and tried to stop Raja Jagannath Shandeo from granting villages to the Brahmans and other needy persons so frequently. This annoyed the Raja Jagannath who in disgust and on the advice of his courtiers left Palkote in 1865 for good. After some time, he returned to Nagpheni and then, shifted to Bhaunro where a temporary fort was constructed for his residence. His two wives gave him two sons. The older one was Pratap Udainath Shandeo whose mother was Rani Luchun Konwar. Before Raja Jagannath Shandeo could appoint his older son, his successor, the *raja* died on 9 July 1869. It was reported to the Deputy Commissioner at Lohardaga.

After the death of Raja Jagannath Shandeo, litigation ensued in 1870 between Lal Upendra Nath Shandeo, who claimed to be the rightful owner of the estate of the Chota Nagpur *raja*, and the court of wards that represented the minor ruler, Pratap Udainath Shandeo. Lal Upendra Nath Shadeo claimed that Pratap Udainath Shandeo was not the legitimate son of the *raja*, but was adopted by Rani Luchun

Konwar. Colonel E.A. Rowlate, the judge, decided the case in favour of Lal Upendra Nath Shandeo.[129] The Court of Wards representing the minor, Pratap Udainath Shandeo, went in appeal to Privy Council, in London, which decided the case in favour of the minor.

Pratap Udainath Shadeo was declared as the *raja* of Chota Nagpur. In 1872, Rani Luchun Konwar shifted her residence to Ratu with him. A palace was created there in 1875. It was surrounded by a wall called Garhbaari. There was a Durga Mandir inside this area where Durga Puja was celebrated every year with great pomp and show.

After independence of India, Thakur Radheshyam Nath Shadeo, a Nagbanshi of Chota Nagpur, filed his nomination for election from a reserved seat against Nirla Enem Horo. His petition was turned down by the Returning Officer on the grounds that he did not belong to a Scheduled Tribe. He then appealed to the Patna High Court in 1974. The Patna High Court turned down his petition on the following grounds:[130]

1. The petitioner does not belong to the Munda tribe or community. He is not a Munda by birth.
2. He belongs to Nagbanshi Kshatriya or Rajput by caste. The Nagbanshi's mother tongue is Hindi and not Mundari (spoken by Mundas), etc.

NOTES

1. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, p. 479.
2. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M. Islam Borah, Guwahati, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1992, vol. I, pp. 257–8.
3. H. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau', *JASB*, vol. XL, pt. I, 1871, p. 111.
4. This is a village 10 miles north of Ranchi.
5. This is a village on the eastern part of Ranchi.
6. Mathura Ram Ustad, 'Akbar and Jahangir's attractions to the Diamonds of Kokhra', *PIHC*, 57th Session, 1996, Madras, pp. 392–3.
7. S.H. Askari and Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, Patna, KPJRI: 1983, vol. II, pt. I, p. 281. According to a legend, the *raja* of Chota Nagpur, the Phani Mukut Rai was the son of Pundarika Nag (a snake

god). One day, the wife of Pundarika Nag discovered the truth of her husband as a snake in the form of a human being. After revealing his truth, Pundarika Nag disappeared from the scene. His wife died in grief and shame. They left behind one little child who was brought up by Madra (a Manki of Sutiambay) along with his own son. He named the child Phani Mukut Rai and appointed him his successor because he was more capable than his own son. Phani Mukut Rai became the *raja* of Chota Nagpur and adopted the symbol of Phani, 'snake crowned' (T. S. Macpherson and Maurice Garnier Hallet, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Ranchi*, Patna, Superintendent, Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, 1917, pp. 24–5).

8. Askari and Ahmad, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, p. 281.

9. Macpherson and Hallet, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Ranchi*, pp. 24–5.

10. B.P. Ambashthya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal, Akbar (1556–1605*), Patna, KPJRI: 1990, p. 251.

11. In his fifth report, James Grant writes that in 1781, the Chota Nagpur Raj was an elevated region, which formed part of south Bihar and containing nearly 18,000 square miles (W.K. Firminger, *The Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, with Glossary*, London, 1812–13; Calcutta, R. Cambray & Co., 1918, vol. II, p. 433).

12. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, pp. 479–80. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, ed. Abdur Rahim and Ashraf Ali, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1888, vol. II, pp. 590–601. In the *Akbarnama* and *Maasir-ul-Umara*, the name of the Khokhra chief is mentioned as Madhu Singh.

13. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 611. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul- Umara*, vol. II, pp. 590–601.

14. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. III, p. 611.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Raja Bairisal showed his bravery by breaking the chain of an elephant. According to G.K. Webester, who was manager of Chota Nagpur in 1875, Raja Madhukar Rai went to Delhi and received the *pargana* of Sherghati as 'A dress of Honor'. The Nagvanshi traditions and Webester say that Raja Madhukar ruled till 1608 and do not mention Raja Bairisal (*G.K. Webster's Report to M.L. Oliphant, D.C. of Lohardaga, Ranchi, 8 April 1875, Papers Relating to Chotanagpur Agrarian Dispute*, vol. I, pt. I, para 4, p. 34). But Colonel Edward Tuite Dalton says that Raja Bairisal was the forty-fourth Raja and his successor, Raja Durjan Sal was the forty-fifth *raja* of the Chota Nagpur chieftaincy. This historical fact is corroborated by the Persian chronicle *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, which mentions the rebellion of Raja Bairisal in 1613 (Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M. Islam Borah, Guwahati, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1992, pp. 257–8. H. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau', *JASB*, 1871, p. 115).

18.

H. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau', p. 115.

19. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M. Islam Borah, pp. 257–8.

20. Ibid., pp. 257–8.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur', p. 115.

24. Ibid.

25. Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr., Borah, p. 419.

26. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur and Aligarh, Private Press, 1863–4, p. 155.

27. Ibid., p. 236.

28. Ibid., p. 244.

29. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau', pp. 115–16.

30. Ibid.

31. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga, vol. XVI, London, Trübner & Co., 1877, p. 362.

32. Lal Pradumn Singh, *Nagvansh*, Lukhnow, Vedant Printing Press, 1951, pt. 2, p. 78 (in Hindi).

33. S.C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, Calcutta, Asia Publishing House, 1912, p. 152.

34. Askari and Qeyamuddin, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 282.

35. R.D. Banerjee, *History of Orissa*, Calcutta, Prabasi Press, 1931, vol. II, pp. 59–60. Blochmann, 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet, and Palamau', p. 117.

36. Sudha Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, New Delhi, Classical Publishing Company, 2001, pp. 42–3. This book is a very important secondary source on the Chota Nagpur chieftaincy and I have consulted it mainly to complete its post-Mughal history (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).

37. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 158.

38. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India, 1640–67*, tr. V. Ball, London,

Macmillan and Co., 1889, vol. II, pp. 82–3.

39. Singh, *Nagvansh*, p. 79.

40. Balmukund Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1972, p. 40.

41. Banerjee, *History of Orissa*, 1931, vol. II, p. 50.

42. Ibid., pp. 59–60.

43. Singh, *Nagvansh*, p. 74.

44. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 161. N. Kumar, *Bihar District Gazetteers*, Patna, Government of Bihar, 1970, p. 43.

45. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 161.

46. It was one of the capitals of Ramgarh Raj, situated about 20 miles south-west of Hazaribagh.

47. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, 'A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th Century by Raja Shitab Rai', *PIHC*, 22nd session, Guwahati, 1959, p. 881.

48. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 44. Singh, *Nagvansh*, p. 80. According to the family records of Bara Lal of Palkot, the capital was shifted in 1667 (Macpherson and Hallet, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, Ranchi, p. 248). According to Gadadhar Prasad Ambastha, the transfer of the capital from Doisa to Palkot took place in the beginning of the eighteenth century (Ambasthya, *Bihar Darpan*, Patna, Granthmala Office, 1996, p. 765) (in Hindi).

49. Singh, *Nagvansh*, pp. 80, 74.

50. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 161.

51. Kumar, *Bihar District Gazetteers*, p. 43.

52. Macpherson and Hallet, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, Ranchi, pp. 26–7.

53. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 161.

54. Ahmad, 'A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th Century by Raja Shitab Rai', p. 382.

55. Singh, *Nagvansh*, p. 74.

56. K.K. Datta, *Alivardi and His times*, Calcultta, Calcutta University Press, 1939, p. 10.

57. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 45.

58. Datta, *Alivardi and His Times*, p. 9.

59.

Ahmad, 'A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th Century by Raja Shitab Rai', p. 382. (Chatra is situated 38 miles north-east of the Hazaribagh town and is a subdivisional headquarters at present.)

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., p. 383. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 161.

64. Singh, *Nagbansh*, pp. 74, 80. However, according to Webster, his rule lasted for five years (G.K. Webster, *Papers Relating to Chotanagpur Agrarian Disputes*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1890, p. 53).

65. Singh, *Nagvansh*, p. 74.

66. Banerjee, *History of Orissa*, p. 91.

67. C.U. Wills, 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chattisgarh', *Journal and Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, vol. XV, no. 5, 1919, pp. 238, 245.

68. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 49.

69. Ibid.

70. Singh, *Nagbansh*, p. 80.

71. Ibid., p. 74.

72. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 58.

73. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 183.

74. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 58.

75. Edward Tuite Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, Calcutta, Office of the Superintendent, Government of Bengal, 1872, p. 178.

76. Ibid. Sonepur is in the Khunti subdivision of the Ranchi district, and Belsia and Basia are in the Gumla district.

77. Virottam, *The Nagbanshis and the Cheros*, p. 98.

78. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 184.

79. Pranab Chandra Roy Chaudhary, *1857 in Bihar, (Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas)*, Patna, Revenue Department, Bihar, 1959, p. 126

80. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, pp. 60–1.

81.

Macpherson and Hallet, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, p. 29.

82. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 61.

83. W.B. Oldham, *Some Historical and Ethical Aspects of the Burdwan District*, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1894, Index V, p. 894.

84. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 73.

85. Ibid.

86. William Wilson Hunter, *Bengal MS Records (1782–1807)*, London, W.H. Allen & Co., 1894, vol. III, nos. 7328, 7329, p. 48.

87. Ibid., no. 8040, p. 122; no. 8484, pp. 165, 210.

88. Ibid., nos. 8812, 8813, p. 192.

89. Ibid., no. 8909, p. 200.

90. Ibid., no. 10148, p. 294.

91. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 11554, p. 109; no. 12826, p. 216.

92. Roy, *The Munda and their Country*, p. 190. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 158.

93. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 75.

94. Ibid., pp. 75–6.

95. Peter Tete, *A Missionary Social Worker in India J.B. Hoffman, The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act and the Catholic Cooperatives, 1893–1928*, Satya Bharati, Ranchi, 1986, p. 8. Also see John Mac Dougall, *Land or Religion?; The Sardar and Kherwar Movements in Bihar 1858–95*, New Delhi, Manohar, 1985, p. 20.

96. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 76.

97. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 176.

98. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 190.

99. Tete, *A Missionary Social Worker in India J.B. Hoffman, The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act and the Catholic Cooperatives, 1893–1928*, p. 8.

100. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 176.

101. Tete, *A Missionary Social Worker in India J.B. Hoffman, The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act and the Catholic Cooperatives, 1893–1928*, p. 8.

102. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, pp. 77–8.

103. Ibid., p. 78.

104. Ibid., pp. 78–9.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., p. 80.
107. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 187.
108. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, pp. 80–1.
109. Ibid., p. 81.
110. Ibid.
111. Virottam, *The Nagvanshis and the Cheros*, p. 188.
112. J.C. Jha, *The Tribal Revolt of Chotanagpur (1831–32)*, Patna, KPJRI, 1987, p. 131.
113. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 81.
114. Jha, *The Tribal Revolt of Chotanagpur*, p. 133.
115. Kumar Suresh Singh, *The Dust-Storm and the Hanging Mist*, Calcutta, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1966, p. 25.
116. E.T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, Calcutta, Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing, 1872, p. 171.
117. Jha, *The Tribal Revolt of Chotanagpur*, p. 68.
118. Ibid., pp. 70–1.
119. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 84.
120. Tete, *A Missionary Social Worker in India J.B. Hoffman, The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act and the Catholic Cooperatives, 1893–1928*, p. 10.
121. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 11.
122. Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 92.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 236.
126. Ibid., p. 237.
127. Ibid.
128.

Sinha, *The Nagvanshis of Chotanagpur*, p. 94.

129. Ibid., p. 126.

130. Ibid., Appendix B, p. 138.

* We do not have much information about the Uzbek settlement in Bihar. I have given the reference of the Uzbek rebellion, which took place between 1564 to 1567. Most of the prominent Uzbek nobles like Ali Quli, Bahadur Khan and Sikandar Khan were posted in eastern India and held *jagirs* in Bihar and eastern UP. When they rebelled against Akbar, the Afghans of Bihar and Bengal, who had good relation with the Uzbeks, joined them. In the same way, the *zamindars* of Bihar also joined the refractory Afghans whenever they rebelled against the Mughals. Here, I have not mentioned their settlement but their rebellion.

* The relative name is not mentioned.

CHAPTER 6

The Gidhaur Chieftaincy

The Gidhaur chieftaincy was one of the oldest ruling families of Bihar.[1] In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, it is mentioned as a *mahal* of the *sarkar* of Bihar.[2] Presently, it is a village and police station in the Jamui subdivision of the Munger district[3] and lies 9 miles south-east of Jamui.[4]

The founder of the Gidhaur chieftaincy was Bir Bikram Shah of the Chandel Sept of Chandrabansi Rajputs.[5] According to family accounts, his ancestors held a small chieftaincy in Mahoba in Bundelkhand. During the twelfth century, they were driven out from there due to the Turkish incursion.[6] After being expelled from central India, they succeeded in establishing their principalities in Bijaygarh, Agrohi-Barkar in the Mirzapur district and Baroli in the present Rewa district.[7] A few generations later, Bir Bikram Shah, a younger brother of the chief of Baroli, left his home and came to Deogarh near Gidhaur and established his hold over the region after expelling Nagoria, the chief of Dosadh, an aboriginal tribe in 1262.[8]

Bir Bikram Shah initially had control only over the areas near Gidhaur. Later on, he extended his chieftaincy further west into a more fertile region, which came to be known as Gidhaur. He built a large fort called the Naulakhagarh along with some other buildings. The chieftaincy also included the Malda region. Sukhdev Singh, the son of Bikram Singh, succeeded to the throne and built his capital at Kakeshwar, 4 miles east of Gidhaur.[9] He died in 1339. Thereafter, we get references to a number of chiefs of Gidhaur, such as Deva Singh, Ram Naranjan Singh, Raj Singh, Darp Narayan Singh and Raghunath Singh.[10] Raghunath Singh is the first chief about whom we get a reference in a near-contemporary account. Abbas Khan Sarwani informs us that Raghunath Singh accepted the subordination of Sher Shah (although the details are not mentioned) and that during Sher Shah's war with Humayun, Raghunath Singh performed a very useful service. Sher Shah deputed him to escort the family of Saif Khan, who had risked his life to check the advance of Humayun towards Bengal,

from Munger. However, we are not provided with any further details of his activities. We are only informed that he died shortly after and his son, Bariar Singh, succeeded to the throne and ruled till 1572 when he expired. Puran Mal, the son and successor of Bariar Singh, was a contemporary of Emperor Akbar. The *Akbarnama* mentions that Puran Mal offered his submission to Munim Khan, the governor of Bihar and Bengal, soon after the latter's conquest of Surajgarh and Munger. He joined the Mughal army and accompanied Munim Khan in his campaign against the Afghans of Bengal.[11] However, the details of the nature of his submission are not given in any of the contemporary accounts.

In the next few years, we do not notice any reference to Puran Mal in the Persian chronicles. But during 1580–1, he openly rebelled and joined the rebel, Masum Khan Kabuli and his supporters. Abul Fazl notes that Puran Mal rescued Masum Khan Kabuli and his supporters from Munger where they were trapped by the imperial army. Beside this we do not get any reference to his activities in the Bengal campaign or after. In his account of 1580–1 when a rebellion of the imperial officers broke out in eastern provinces, Abul Fazl writes that Puran Mal took advantage of this, abandoned his loyalty towards the Mughals and helped the Afghan rebels.

During 1585–6, we find the only reference that Puran Mal serving was Shahbaz Khan, the Mughal commander, in his expedition against the Afghans. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, who was the neighbouring chief of Puran Mal, was also helping Shahbaz Khan at the same time. Raja Sangram Singh and Puran Mal were bitter enemies on account of some family feud.[12] However, Puran Mal was successful in wining over the favour of Shahbaz Khan and inflicted a defeat on Sangram Singh with his support. Sangram Singh was forced to take shelter in a nearby forest. Puran Mal became quite powerful in the entire region after this victory but an unfortunate incident suddenly changed the whole situation in favour of Raja Sangram Singh soon after.[13] A Rajput retainer, who was in the service of Puran Mal, left him and joined Sangram Singh. He plotted to kill Shahbaz Khan but murdered another person mistakenly. When Shahbaz Khan came to know of this, he became suspicious of Puran Mal and immediately imprisoned him. Although Puran Mal was not involved in the affair, as soon as he came to know about it, he got the assailant killed to prove his innocence. However, he had lost the confidence and favour of Shahbaz Khan.[14] Soon after, Shahbaz Khan was transferred to Bengal and Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashadi was dispatched from Awadh to take charge of Bihar. Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashadi served Bihar for a short period. For some time, Raja Puran Mal remained loyal to the Mughals but rebelled

against the imperial authority again during 1590–1. Abul Fazl informs us that his ego, pride and confidence in the strength of his fort made him defy the Mughal authority.[15]

Raja Man Singh, who had been appointed the governor of Bihar in 1587, led an expedition against Raja Puran Mal. He captured his forts and plundered his territory. Puran Mal came forward with an apology and submitted to Raja Man Singh. He presented the latter some elephants and valuables. He also gave his sister in marriage to Chandrabhan, the brother of Raja Man Singh.[16] After this, Raja Puran Mal remained loyal to the Mughals.

In his thirty-seventh regnal year (1592–3), Raja Puran Mal served the Mughals. He, along with Madhu, Lakhi Rai, Koka, Rup Narain Sisodiah and others, went under Yusuf Khan Kashmiri to fight the Afghans in Orissa, along with the imperial forces led by Raja Man Singh.[17] In this operation, a number of important Afghan rebels, such as Nasib, Lodi, Jamal, the sons of Qutlu and Jalal Khan Kakshal, were captured and handed over to the Emperor Akbar.[18] In this campaign against the Afghans, Raja Puran Mal proved to be very useful for the Mughals.

We do not find any reference about the relation between Puran Mal and the Mughals in Persian chronicles. According to family accounts, he had two sons, Hari Singh and Bisambhar Singh. Hari Singh was kept in Delhi as a hostage for the good conduct of Puran Mal.[19] When he returned, he was given the *pargana* of Bishazari but found Bisambhar Singh on the throne of Gidhaur. A settlement was made between the two brothers. Hari Singh got the ninth part of the Gidhaur chieftaincy and the seventh part of Bishazari, while the rest was retained by Bisambhar Singh. Hari Singh became the chief of the Gidhaur Raj while Bisambhar Singh found another seat at Khaira.[20]

We find a long gap now in the relations between the Gidhaur chieftaincy and the Mughals. Apart from the lack of information on the Gidhaur chieftaincy during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan, it also appears that the chiefs of Gidhaur were at peace with the Mughals for a long time. During the reign of Shah Jahan we find a reference of Dulan Singh (Dal Singh in a Mughal *farman*), the fourteenth *raja*. It seems that Raja Dulan Singh remained loyal to the Mughals and supported the Mughal authority in Bihar. Emperor Shah Jahan conferred the title of ‘Raja’ on him in 1651.[21]

During the war of succession, each of the contesting sons of Shah Jahan, Dara and Shuja tried to get the support of the local chiefs and in their endeavour of pursuance, wrote respective *farmans* addressed to Raja Dulan Singh of Gidhaur, asking him for help.

In the following *farman*, Prince Shah Shuja addressed him on 19 March 1658:[22]

The best of the peers and contemporaries, the highest among the equals and the grandees, Dal Singh (Dulan Singh) being hopeful of receiving the royal favors, may know that the fact of his unfailing sincerity and correct faith has come to the notice of the most Enlightened and the Highest through the attendants. This has rendered necessary the conferment of royal favors upon him (Dal Singh) since by the way of favor and for the satisfaction of the best of the contemporaries, I am sending the impression of the hand, he ought to proceed to the court of his exalted majesty with all his *sawars* (cavalry) and *payadah* (infantry) which he may have at his disposal, so that he shall be raised and distinguished with royal favors. He should take up this matter with all seriousness and care and act in keeping with exalted order.[23]

According to the *farman* of Shuja, it is clear that he was in desperate need of help from all sides. When he was defeated by Sulaiman Shikoh at Bahadurpur near Varanasi on 14 February 1658, his position became very critical. He gave every assurance of favour to Raja Dal Singh to get his support in the war of succession.

In another *farman*, Prince Dara Shikoh, on behalf of Emperor Shah Jahan, addressed Raja Dal Singh and sought his help. This *farman* was issued on 14 April 1658:[24]

The best among the grandees and the like beings, the great among the equals and the contemporaries, worthy of receiving favors and privileges, Raja Dal Singh, the *zamindar* of Gidhaur, being duly honored with royal gifts, may know that in the present time the message of Sulaiman Shikoh Bahadur, the able and the brave son, the fortunate and the well behaved, the all conquering and ever-fortunate by Lord's grace, the son of the ruling royal house, and of highest descent, having the blessings of God, the pearl of royal crown and of sublime Majesty, the star of sparkling wisdom and prudence, the cloud of showering generosity, privileges and power, ever-watering the flower of fortune, the all embracing all powerful prince expansive as sky, the good natured, reached (Dara Shikoh) that he (Dal Singh), the best among peers and contemporaries, under the guidance of the fortune, the faithful servant and the well-wisher of the empire, is treading the path of loyalty and would escort the royal force through his land against the cowardly and the disrespectful Shah Shuja who did not discriminate between right and wrong, and after duly punishing him (Shah Shuja), would drive him (Shah Shuja) out of Munger and its quarter and would thus force him to lead the life of adversity. This news proved highly agreeable to me (Dara Shikoh), and he (Dal Singh) was assured that in return for this service of his (Dal Singh's) he (Dal Singh) would have access to the presence of the emperor and would receive royal favors and rewards and a good *mansab* and a good title; if he (Dal Singh) would want to get held of the *zamindari* of Kharagpur from the hands of the unfortunate Bahroz, I (Dara) would agree to it and that he (Dal Singh) might uproot him (Bahroz) and occupy his (Bahroz's) territory. He (Dal Singh) was directed to communicate his wish so that the emperor might actually announce the favor regarding him (Dal Singh), and my (Daris) gifts would also continue in his favor in future.[25]

According to the *farman*, it appears that Raja Dal Singh of Gidhaur supported Dara Shikoh in his struggle against Shah Shuja. It also appears that Dara Shikoh was not happy with Raja Bahroz of Kharagpur because he was supporting Shah Shuja and so he assured Raja Dal Singh that if he wished, he could get the *zamindari* of the

Kharagpur Raj.

During Emperor Aurangzeb's reign, we lack accounts of the Gidhaur chieftaincy. It seems that the chiefs of Gidhaur remained submissive to the Mughals during his period. It is also a fact that Aurangzeb was more focused on the Deccan problems than on any other.

When the British assumed the government of Bengal and Bihar, Raja Gopal Singh, the nineteenth in descent, was deprived of his chieftaincy for the time being but recovered its possession later on. The British granted the title of 'Raja' to Jaimangal Singh, the chief of Gidhaur, in 1856 in recognition of his services. He had helped the British in their suppression of the Santhal rebellion of 1855 and 1861.[26] Jaimangal Singh was granted a territory yielding a rent of Rs. 3,000 per annum, which was rent-free for him in acknowledgement of the services that he had rendered during the revolt of 1857. He was given the title of 'Maharaja' in 1865 and made a Knight Commander of the Star of India (KCSI), in 1866. The title of 'Maharaja Bahadur' was made hereditary in the family in 1877 on the occasion of the assumption of the title of 'Empress' of India by Queen Victoria. Jaimangal Singh was succeeded by Maharaja Siva Prasad Singh and then by Maharaja Chandra Mauleshwar Prasad Singh Bahadur.[27]

NOTES

1. W.W. Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Einme to Gwalior*, new edn., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908, vol. XII, p. 237.
2. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, p. 418.
3. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Monghyr*, Calcutta, The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1909, p. 201.
4. W.W. Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Einme to Gwalior*, vol. XII, p. 237.
5. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Monghyr*, p. 202.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. B.P. Ambashthya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556–1615)*, Patna, KPJRI, 1990, p. 155.
11. Ibid.

12. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, pp. 460–1.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 461.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Monghyr*, p. 202.
21. Ibid. It was a small estate near Gidhaur.
22. Ibid.
23. B.P. Ambashthya, 'Some Farmans, Sanads, Nishans and Inscriptions in Bihar', *JBRS*, vol. XLIII, September-December 1957, pts. III and IV, pp. 224–5.
24. Ibid., pp. 225–7.
25. Ibid.
26. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Monghyr*, pp. 203–4.
27. Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

The Darbhanga Raj

The origin and rise of the Darbhanga Raj is quite different from the histories of the other chieftaincies of Bihar. Mahesh Thakur, founder, was granted the rights of *chaudhari* and *qanungo* of Tirhut during the reign of Akbar. Later on, the family received several other favours and extensions of their superior rights from successive Mughal emperors. By the time of Aurangzeb's reign, they had almost gained the position of autonomous chiefs. The title of 'Raja', however, was conferred on them only in 1720.

Darbhanga was one of the *mahals* in the *sarkar* of Tirhut during the reign of Akbar.[1] The ancient name of the Darbhanga region is Mithila. Mithila was bounded on the north by the Himalayas and the rivers Kosi (Kausik), Ganga and Gandak on the east, south and west, respectively,[2] and comprised the present districts of Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Hajipur, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Saharsa, Champaran (east and west), parts of Munger, Bhagalpur, Purnia in India, and the Morang Sapta Sara Labi, Rotahat, Vera and Parsa districts in Nepal.[3] The chieftaincy covered an area of more than 2,000 sq. miles.[4]

Mithila has been a centre of high learning and culture through the ages. The region enjoyed a very important position during the period of the *mahajanapadas* and the Mauryans. During the Gupta age, the Mithila region was known as Tirabhukti, which included both Vaishali and Mithila[5] but the latter gained importance as a border province with Nepal and Tibet on the north and Kamarupa on the east at the time of Harshavardhana of Kanauj in the seventh century. Till the coming of the Karnatas,[6] Mithila remained a dependancy of one or the other principal kingdoms. The Karnatas established their political authority over the Mithila region in about 1098.[7] They ruled till 1353 and were replaced by the Oinwaras.[8] In 1527, Nasrat Shah invaded Tirhut and killed Kansanarayan, the last Oinwara chief of Mithila, and the Oinwara dynasty came to an end. Soon after, Mithila slipped into

a period of chaos and confusion. The Afghans exercised control over it up to 1574 when it passed under the Mughals. Thereafter, the overall administration of Mithila fell into the hands of the Mughal emperors.[9]

Mahesh Thakur, a Maithili Brahman and the founder of the Darbhanga Raj, was one of the most learned scholars of the time. His ancestors came from Mandala in the district of Jabalpur, in Madhya Pradesh, in the beginning of the sixteenth century.[10] It appears that one of his ancestors, Gosain Shankarshan Upadhyaya, was granted a village in Khandwa and on account of holding landed property, he like the other chiefs of the region, began to be called Thakur.[11]

It seems that after the conquest of Bihar, Mahesh Thakur approached Akbar and apparently impressed him with his learning. The emperor appointed him the *chaudhari* and *qanungo* of the *sarkar* of Tirhut, and a *farman* was also issued in this connection. Although this *farman* is not available to us, a close study of the *farman* issued to Gopal Thakur, the son of Mahesh Thakur, clearly indicates that a *farman* to Mahesh Thakur had been issued. The *farman* addressed to Gopal Thakur runs as follows:[12]

> Jalalluddin Muhammad Akbar *Badshah Ghazi*, *Khaludullah-o-mulkahuwa-abadahu*. Exalted *farman*, let it be known to the exalted officers and economy effecting functionaries, *mutasaddies* of *diwani* and *karories* of *sarkar* Tirhut, present and future that Ajit Thakur (Achutta Thakur) obedient to officers, brother of Gopal as, obedient to Islam, *qanungo* and *chaudhari* of the above mentioned *sarkar* having presented himself in the court, the Refuge of Humanity … submitted to the effect that the *qanungo* and *chaudhari* of the said *sarkar* were assigned to the said Gopal Das and the said person during the life time of *diwan* (no name is mentioned here) performed good service for the betterment of the ryots's condition. Therefore, the *farman* having (the same force of) incontrovertibility as Death had the honor of being brought into existence (issued) that the *chaudhari* and *qanungo* of the entire above mentioned *sarkar* be restored to the said Gopal Das, obedient to Islam. It is expected out of his (sense of) profuse honesty and ability that he will put forth his best endeavors in looking after the interests of *diwani* and in protecting the lives of ryots and increasing their prosperity. And if he duly performed the said duty, he should realize from the ryots the *rusum-i-chaudharai* at 1 tanka per *bigha* and *rusum-i-qanungoi* at one-forth *tanka* per *bigha* totaling 1¼ *tankas* per *bigha* and from the same (torn in the original) find out the means to support himself. It is ordered that the *muqaddams*, ryots and cultivators residing in the said *sarkar* should consider the above named person (without associating anybody else's name with his) as the official *Chaudhari* and *qanungo* and should not go beyond (i.e. act contrary to) his orders and advices which are in accordance with equity and are conducive to the welfare and prosperity (of the ryots) and pay him without interruption the *rusum-i-chaudhari* and *qanungoi*, as of old. They should not consider any one as sharing these powers with him. They should act as ordered and consider this as urgent.[13]

The date of this *farman* appears to be around 11 June 1578. It seems that the *farman* of Mahesh Thakur must have been issued around 1575–6 because Akbar conquered Bihar in 1574. Traditions, however, are at variance about how Mahesh Thakur was able to get a

farman in his own favour. In a Hindi work, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa,* on the history of Mithila,[14] a well-known tradition in verse, shows that Mahesh Thakur got the *farman* on the occasion of Ramnavami, which generally falls in March-April every year.[15]

It is said that a learned Muslim had once thrown a challenge of holding a discussion on Hindu philosophy at Fatehpur Sikri. Thereupon, Raja Birbal, a popular noble of Akbar's court, suggested the name of Mahesh Thakur and requested the emperor to invite him. Raja Birbal had met Mahesh Thakur in a religious discourse at Garha Katanga.[16] So Mahesh Thakur was invited and came to Fatehpur Sikri along with his disciple, Raghunandan Jha. After their arrival at the court, they were introduced to Emperor Akbar by Raja Man Singh. The emperor was pleased after talking to them and allowed Raghunandan Jha to enter into a discussion with the learned Muslim. The discussion lasted for three days and Raghunandan Jha emerged as the winner. He was favoured with a *farman* conferring upon him the territory of Tirhut, a reward which he declined in favour of his guru, i.e. Mahesh Thakur.[17] As the *farman* had already been drawn in his favour, difficulties stood in the way of transferring it to Mahesh Thakur. Ultimately, on the intercession of the emperor's mother, Raja Man Singh and Raja Birbal, a fresh *farman* was issued in favour of Mahesh Thakur.[18]

Although the original *farman* in the name of Mahesh Thakur is not available, its contents are noted in a *mahzarnama* (a document), of Sundar Thakur dated 1652. The following is an English translation of the relevant portion:[19]

I the humblest one, Chaudhari Sundar Thakur beseech from the venerable Syeds, Sheikhs, Qazis, Muftis and other persons living in the *parganas* of *sarkar* Tirhut to testify to the truth of the fact that the *chaudhari* of *sarkar* Tirhut, *suba* Bihar and the *qanungoi* of the *parganas* of *sarkar* Tirhut have been obtained by Mahesh Thakur from the court of Hazrat Jahanpanah (the refuge of the world). The said Thakur (Mahesh) in accordance with the exalted *farman* remained in occupation of *qanungoi* and *chaudhari*. The son of Mahesh Thakur also obtained a *farman* as of old. The said son Gopal, Ajit (Achyuta) and Parmananda were real brothers and Subhankar Thakur was (their) step brother (all being sons of Mahesh Thakur). Ajit died issueless. Gopal, Parmananda and Shubhankar the three brothers shared the *chaudhari* and *qanungoi*. Shubhankar Thakur possessed 1/3 share of 5 *annas* 6 *gandas* out of the proceeds of the full *chaudhari* and *qanungoi*. He had three wives; from the first he had Purusottam, from the second Narain and from the third Raghuram Thakur. His sons continued to hold his 1/3 share. Gunakar Thakur, son of Purusottam Thakur, and Hariram Thakur, son of Raghuram Thakur have sold their share in the name of Narayan Thakur, my elder brother and myself on account of (their inability to pay) the arrears of Government revenue. We two also continue to possess our own share in it.

Out of the remaining 2/3 shares one belonged to Gopal Thakur, our uncle and the other to Parmanand, the brother of Gopal. Parmanand died issueless, both (the

shares totaling 10 *annas* 14 (12?) *gandas* devolved on Hamanuk (Hemangad) Thakur, son of Gopal. In AD 1650 the *qabuliyat* for the revenue of Tirhut had been tendered by all the three shares holders together in accordance with the order of the then (revenue) officer. Out of the total outstanding government dues of Rs. 31,500, Rs. 10,500 being the one-third share of the petitioners (Sunder and Narayan) was deposited, and Rs. 21,000 were due from Lakshman Chaudharai, Ratidhar Thakur, Jaeshwar Thakur (sons of Hemangad Thakur) who jointly held 2/3 shares of 10 *annas* 14 *gandas*. These persons could not make the payment, so they sold their full share of the *Chaudhari* and *qanungo* totaling 10 *annas* and 14 *gandas* to me the petitioner, for Rs. 21,000 amount of government dues in 1652 and the said amount was deposited by me in the government treasury.[20]

Anyone having the knowledge of these affairs is requested to put his signature on this paper. This servant of the people shall remain obliged for it.[21]

According to the *mahzarnama,* Mahesh Thakur was originally appointed as the *sadar chaudhari* of Tirhut but owing to his failure to pay the government dues on time, he was demoted to the office of *chaudhari*. It seems that the original appointment of *chaudhari* might have been upgraded sometime after the grant of the *farman* to Gopal Thakur.[22] According to the *mahzarnama,* it also appears that the income from the *sarkar* of Tirhut was divided among the various descendants of Mahesh Thakur but later on, through purchase, all the shares came into one hand. Mahesh Thakur had five sons: Ramchandra Thakur, Gopal Thakur, Achyuta Thakur and Parmanand, and Subhankar their step-brother.[23] Ramchandra and Achyuta Thakur soon died without any sons. The remaining three brothers divided the ancestral property among themselves. Gopal and Parmanand continued to live together even after their separation from Subhankar. After some time, Parmanand died without an heir with the result that Gopal Thakur's son, Hemangad Thakur, got his uncle's share, too. In this way, Hemangad Thakur's sons, Lakshman Chaudhari, Ratidhar Thakur and Jogeswar Thakur, possessed 2/3 shares. In 1652, in accordance with the orders of the imperial government, all the shareholders together took the *kabuliyat* of the *sarkar* of Tirhut but could not pay the government dues of Rs. 31,500. Out of this total, Rs. 21,000 was due on the three sons of Hemangad Thakur, who could not make the payment. They sold their share of *chaudharai* and *qanungoship* to Sundar Thakur in 1652.[24] The stipulated amount of Rs. 21,000 was deposited by Sundar Thakur in the government treasury. As he acquired the posts of *sadar chaudhari* and *qanungo* of Tirhut, he came to enjoy a very high position in the region. He and Narayan Thakur had already purchased the shares of their step-brothers. They also received the *nankar* grants of villages like Sarson in the *pargana* of Bhaur and Bijilpura in the *pargana* of Berai from Emperor Shah Jahan. The Darbhanga Raj came into prominence during the rule of Mahinath and Narapati, the sons of Sundar Thakur. Both of them had close contact with the imperial court. Emperor Aurangzeb was so pleased

with Mahinath Thakur that he granted him 110 *parganas* in the suba of Bihar and Bengal. He was also given a *khilat* (robe of honour) and *mahi maratib* (fish insignia). The *farman* issued in this connection runs as follows:[25]

Be it known to the *Mutasaddis* of *Mahals*, present and future, *tiyuldars* (holders of *jagir* lands), *zamindars*, officers and *nazims* of *Mustaqunar-ul Mulk*, Bihar and the paradise like province (*Jinnat-ul Balad*) of Bengal that since the news of the sincerity and good service of Mahinath Thakur (1667–87) son of Sundar Thakur, who is obedient to Islam and subservient to (local) officers in the conquest of the country of Palamau appertaining to *suba* Bihar and in the suppression of the *zamindars* of Morang[26] along with the late Nawab Mirza Khan, *faujdar* of Darbhanga, has reached the exalted presence; therefore, by way of grace and in order to honor (the grantee) the *sadr zamindari* and settlement of *sarkar* Tirhut along with the services of *zamindar*, *milkiat, chaudharai* and *muqaddami* of *parganas* Dharampur, *sarkar* Farrukhabad alias Monghyr, pertaining to Bihar and the *zamindari* of *pargana* Haveli, Purnea and Tajpur pertaining to Bengal and the *chaudharai* and *qanungoi* and *sarkar* Tirhut which (last two) belong to the grantee according to the *farman* of Hazrat Arsh Ashiyani, together with a *khilat* and *mahi maratib* are granted in heredity and in accordance with the enclosed endorsement (*zimn*) to the said Mahinath Thakur, obedient to Islam.

He should perform the said services with diligence and truthfulness without sparing any efforts (in the performance of these duties). His duties comprised the supervision of financial and administrative affairs collection (of revenue), depositing and withdrawing from the treasury* of the *diwan* of the *suba*. He should attend to the administration of the villages, suppression of the rebels and destruction of their strongholds. Apart from collecting his sustenance (remuneration by way of *nankar-i-rusum*,[27] he should not appropriate any account from the Royal collections. He should keep in view the performance of his duties and submit the installments of government revenue punctually. He should strive for the habitation of *mahals* and increasing of revenues and perform his due duties in such a way that increase in government revenue and *ryots*, prosperity may occur gradually and the report of his good service may reach the exalted presence.

He should depute *amins* in each *pargana*, get the cultivated and fallow lands measured, contact the *ryots* individually and extend *taccavi* to the indigent ones and strive for the increase of cultivation so that in every *mahal* development and surplus (of revenue) may be brought about. He should correct the *Hast-o Bud* papers, collect the *Aham* (?) revenue in respect of every harvest, bring about increase in revenue and *sayir*, effect economy in expenditure, and deposit the amounts in the treasury. If there are any areas of revenue he should consider them as dues from himself and account for them in the next year. He should collect his *nankars* and *dasturs* in accordance with established regulations.

It is ordered that the victorious and illustrious sons and high placed nobles should consider the said Thakur, in heredity to be the *zamindar* of the said *parganas* and (of?) the said *sarkar* … (ad 1665).[28]

The endorsement gives the following details of the areas granted: a total of 110 *parganas*, which includes the *sarkar* of Tirhut, the valley of the mountain (sub-Himalyan tract in the north), the *zamindari*, *milkiat* and settlement of 102 *parganas*, the settlement of the *pargana* of Dharampur, and 1 *pargana* in the *sarkar* of Munger, in the province of

Bihar. In the province of Bengal, 7 *parganas* were granted, of which, 5 *parganas* in the *sarkar* of Purnia, and 2 *parganas* in the *sarkar* of Tajpur.[29]

A very important document connected with this *farman* is a letter of Aurangzeb, dated December 1666 and addressed to Lashkar Khan, the governor of Bihar (1664–8). It was written a few months after the issuing of the *farman* and desired him to honour Mahinath Thakur for his valuable assistance to the *faujdar* of Darbhanga in the conquest of the Morang area. This document is of unique importance for the history of Bihar for it mentions certain contemporary political events there in the words of the emperor himself. Its translation is as follows:[30]

It had come to our exalted notice from the reports of the *waqai nigar* of *suba* Bihar that the ill-fated *zamindar* of Morang, in his false pride, had been the creator of disturbances. Accordingly the late Mirza Khan, *faujdar* of Darbhanga along with the men of Mahinath Thakur (1666–87) and his brother Nirpat Thakur having displayed, the prowess of their swordsmanship gave a thorough beating to that ill fated one (*raja* of Morang). He (*faujdar*) having died a natural death there, his brother Masum Khan was appointed in his place as *faujdar* of Darbhanga. He was honored with a *khillat* and a horse with gold trappings. The good services and exertions of the deceased Khan in the capture of the fort and the reduction of the enemy came to our notice. As a matter of fact, this is the result of the (efforts) of Daud Khan of worthy rank for he kept the royal servants contented and devoted to the performance of good deeds….* A necklace of pearls, worth Rs. 50,000 had (accordingly) been granted to the said (Daud) Khan.

Since Mahinath has displayed such valour, I have by an exalted *farman* granted him the *Sadr zamindari* and settlement of *sarkar*Tirhut and *zamindari* of *pargana* Dharampur, *sarkar* Munghyr and conferred upon him a *khilat* and Mahi Maratib. The Valiant Khan (Lashkar Khan) too, should bestow some consideration upon him which may honour him in the eyes of his neighbours and send him a letter of approbation assuring him of the permanent enjoyment of the *zamindari* so that other subordinates may be spurred to similar good services (1666).[31]

These two documents give a good account of the evolution of the Darbhanga Raj from the position of petty officials of the empire to the likeness of territorial chiefs. As mentioned above, Emperor Akbar granted Gopal Thakur the position of a petty functionary with cash remuneration. In due course of time with the favour of successive Mughal rulers, especially Aurangzeb, Mahinath Thakur was granted the *sadar zamindari* and a large number of *parganas* in the *sarkars* of Tirhut, Munger, Purnia and Tajpur. He was also favoured with a *khilat* and *mahi maratib*. These honours were usually conferred upon *rajas*, chiefs and *mansabdars*, not on middle-ranking functionaries. Besides, the grant was a very extensive one, covering the *zamindari* of over a 100 *parganas* spread over Bihar and Bengal.

These grants, along with the posts of *chaudhari* and *qanungo*, were

made hereditary. The acquisition of the status of a Raj also probably led to the inauguration of the practice of succession by the law of primogeniture. Hitherto, it depended upon the will of the dying ruler and this continued till the British became the masters of the country. During the time of the later Mughals when the central authority became weak, this Raj also came to acquire more and more power like many other *zamindars* of Bihar. It received the first check when Ali Vardi Khan became the governor of Bengal (1740–56). By then, the Darbhanga Raj had attained such a position that Ali Vardi himself conferred the title of 'Raja' on Raghava Singh. The strength and the power of the Raj can be well-imagined from the fact that in the time of Raja Narendra Singh, it could defy the authority of the by the payment of revenue.

In a report to the Patna Committee of Revenue, Shitab Rai, the naib *diwan* of Bihar, admitted that the feeble government of the *nazims* had rendered the *zamindars* independent since the decline of the empire. This growing power received shock when the rule of the British East India Company began over the *suba* of Bihar. Raja Madhara Singh resisted it but he had to compromise in the end, which surely curtailed much of the powers of this Raj. Thus, it is clear that the Darbhanga Raj was different from the other *zamin- daris* of the *suba* of Bihar. It evolved gradually from Akbar's period to that of Aurangzeb, starting with the appointment of Mahesh Thakur as a petty government official to the elevation of Mahinath Thakur to the rank of a chief.

It is necessary to give a brief account of the chiefs of Darbhanga to understand the nature of their relationship with the Mughal imperial authority.

Mahesh Thakur, the first chief of the Darbhanga Raj was the son of Chan Thakur, a resident of the village of Bhaur, which was an important seat of learning.[32] He was the youngest among his brothers.[33] From his early childhood, he was deeply interested in learning, especially Sanskrit literature and became a great scholar of the language. His scholarship made a deep impression on Emperor Akbar who rewarded him by appointing him as the *chaudhari* and *qanungo* of Tirhut. Even after his appointment, Mahesh Thakur continued to devote more time to learning than in attending the affairs of the government.[34]

However, he carried out his administrative duties efficiently. He suppressed the rebel *zamindars* of the area and recovered the lands that had been forcibly occupied by them. He also settled disputes with the family of the Oinwaras[35] by giving them the *parganas* of Bachhaura, Aharaura, Bhala and Khanda, and received an agreement letter (*svatvanivrttipatra*) written by them in return. Adhara Das, a

kayastha, was his *diwan* and Damodar Jha was appointed to look after the administration of Tirhut.[36] All the petty *zamindars* of the surrounding areas acknowledged his authority and paid their taxes to the Mughal rulers through him. Mahesh Thakur paid Rs. 1 lakh annually to the imperial government.[37]

During the closing years of his life, Mahesh Thakur retired to Banaras where he breathed his last.[38] We do not know the exact date of his death but it seems that he died sometime in 1578. He had ruled for about a year and a half.[39] His headquarters were at Bhaura.[40] The jurisdiction of Mahesh Thakur extended from '*az gang ta sang wa az kosi ta ghosi*', i.e. from the Ganga in the south to the mountains in the north (up to Nepal) and from Kosi in the east (in the Purnia district) to all of Tirhut, which was bounded by the Gandak at Hajipur.[41]

Mahesh Thakur devoted much of his time in pursuing literary activities. He wrote a verified history of Akbar's reign entitled *Sarvades Vitrant Samgrah* in Sanskrit. The original copy of this work is preserved in the India Office Library, London.[42] His other works are *Aloka Pradipa,* a commentary on Pakshadhara Mishra's *Nyayaloka*, and *Darpan*, a commentary on Ganesha Upadhyaya's *Nyaya-Chintamani.* Mahesh Thakur also wrote *Dayasara*, *Tethitattva-chintamani* and *Aticharadi-nirnaya*. It seems that Mahesh Thakur had also met his great contemporary saint poet, Tulsidas, in Varanasi.[43]

After the death of Mahesh Thakur, his eldest son, Gopal Thakur, succeeded to the *chaudharai* of Tirhut.[44] Soon after his succession, he faced a problem from the Bharajatiya Rajputs of Bhaura who were very powerful in the region of Tirhut and were creating disturbances in the entire area. However, by the strategies of Gopal Thakur and his brother, Achyuta Thakur, the rebels were defeated and expelled. It is generally believed that Achyuta Thakur mobilized all his forces, and played an important role in their defeat and expulsion.[45]

Some time in the reign of Akbar, Gopal Thakur was summoned to Delhi to explain the circumstances due to which he had not been able to pay his dues and had allowed the arrears to accumulate. Gopal Thakur sent his son, Hemangad Thakur, to represent his case. On being questioned, Hemangad informed the imperial authorities that owing to the disturbances created by the Bharajatiya Rajputs, he had not been able to collect the revenue on time and requested that he may be given some more time to pay the arrears. However, he failed to impress the authorities and was imprisoned. In prison, he began to work on some astronomical problems. In the absence of writing material, he made calculations on the ground. The prison authorities, considering these acts as a form of mental disease, reported the matter to the emperor. Hemangad Thakur was brought before the emperor and when asked about his writing on the ground, told the emperor

that he had worked out the schedule of eclipses for one thousand years to come.[46] He also informed the emperor of the timing of the next eclipse. The emperor was greatly impressed with his work and ordered him to be immediately released from prison. The arrears of revenue were also waived.[47] This event had a great effect on the life of Hemangad Thakur. After returning to Tirhut, he stopped to help his father, Gopal Thakur and devoted the rest of his life to learning. An important event of Gopal Thakur's time was the land survey and settlement of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa undertaken by Raja Todar Mal, the *diwan* of Emperor Akbar.[48] The survey of the Tirhut region was made and its revenue demand fixed at Rs. 11,63,000 annually, which Gopal Thakur agreed to pay. The region of Tirhut at the time was the base of all sorts of rebels and Mughal authority was not firmly established there. It also seems that in view of the disturbed conditions, the local authorities refused to acknowledge the power and position of the khandavalas.[49] Gopal Thakur was not only able to overcome all the difficulties in the region but also played a very important role in establishing peace and order in north Bihar. Gopal Thakur gave full cooperation to Munim Khan Khan-i-Jahan, the governor of Bengal, under whom the forces were reorganized to fight the turbulent forces in Bihar.[50] In recognition of his services to the Mughal army for bringing about stability, peace and order in Bihar, Emperor Akbar assigned him the region of Tirhut with certain specifications of his rights and duties. A *farman* to this effect was issued, which we have already discussed above. However, it seems that the local authorities did not acknowledge the official position of Gopal Thakur. Therefore the emperor issued another *farman* clearly specifying that 'they should not consider anyone as sharing these powers with him'.[51]

The exact territorial jurisdiction of Gopal Thakur is not very clear from the present information but his headquarters were at Darbhanga. After some time, we find that differences arose among his family members, especially after the death of Achyuta Thakur.[52] Gopal Thakur retired to Varanasi toward the closing years of his life and died around 1580.[53] Gopal Thakur was succeeded by his younger brother, Parmanand Thakur, who is also mentioned as Rajarishi Parmanand.[54] He had no interest in worldly affairs and, therefore, after his death as he had no son, the office of *chaudhari* and *qanungo* passed into the hands of Subhankar Thakur, the fifth and last son of Mahesh Thakur.[55]

Subhankar Thakur spent his early life in Varanasi where he obtained shastric knowledge. He soon became a scholar of repute by his hard work, and wrote two books, *Tithinirnaya* and *Shrihasta-muktaral*. He returned from Varanasi on the invitation of Hemangad

Thakur, the son of Gopal Thakur. Hemangad Thakur offered him the office of *chaudhari* and *qanungo* but some family members refused to accept his candidature because his maternal grandfather belonged to a low family. He also faced a problem of getting married into a good family. He, however, was able to overcome all these issues, and shifted his headquarters from Bhaura to Bhawarah near Madhubani, which was the stronghold of the Bharajatiya Rajputs in the past.[56] He established cordial relations with the *faujdar* of Darbhanga who allowed him to build a town to the west of the river Bagmati in a village, which later came to be known as Sub-hankar (near Darbhanga).[57] He dug a big tank known as Subhankari in the village of Ujan.[58] After ruling for twenty-three years, he died in 1617. He had four sons: Purusottam Thakur, Narayan Thakur, Sundar Thakur and Raghuram Thakur.[59] Being the eldest, Purusottam Thakur became the *chaudhari* and functioned in that position from 1617 to 1633. During his time, an attempt was made by Raghudeva Mishra, a maternal grandson of Achyuta Thakur, to claim a share in the estate. He made a representation in this regard to Emperor Shah Jahan but he failed to secure a share. Achyuta Thakur died without a male issue; Raghudeva Mishra again claimed a share in the property of his maternal grandfather, Achyuta Thakur. However, his claim was rejected by Emperor Shah Jahan.[60]

Purusottam Thakur had built his palace in the village of Chatriya which was named after him and is still known as Purusottampur.[61] It is believed that Purusottam Thakur was invited to Kalaghat (Darbhanga) by the *faujdar* of Darbhanga and treacherously murdered in 1633. His wife went to Delhi to represent her case to the emperor and succeeded in getting the *faujdar* executed. Thereafter, she performed the rites of sati on the bank of the river Yamuna at Nigambodh Ghat.[62]

Purusottam Thakur was succeeded by his step-brother, Narayan Thakur and a *parwana* to this effect was issued in 1634.[63] This *parwana* also made him responsible for looking after the affairs of the *pargana* of Bharawara.[64] It is clear from the *mahzarnama*[65] of Sundar Thakur, discussed earlier, that he and Narayan Thakur purchased the shares of their step-brothers out of the amount received as a remuneration of the *chaudhari* and *qanungoi*. It seems that the older brother was only a nominal incumbent and the younger brother actually managed the affairs of the post of *chaudhari*. It also appears from the *mahzarnama* that Sundar Thakur took a lot of interest in the affairs of this post of *chaudhari*.[66]

During the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, Mithila formed a part of the administration of the *suba* of Bihar.[67] The pattern of administration established by Akbar continued during Jahangir's reign

without any change. The administration of the *suba* was managed by a *subedar* through *faujdars* who were deputed to administer *sarkars*. Prince Pervez was appointed the governor of Bihar in 1621 and founded a village called Parwezabad near Darbhanga after his own name, now known as Pahleza. In 1624, due to the rebellious activities of Prince Khurram, Bihar, including the region of Tirhut, was disturbed for a while. However, the Khandavalas remained peaceful and continued their service of *chaudhari* and *qanungo* during the time of Jahangir. During this time, Darbhanga and Hajipur were assigned to Abdullah Khan in *jagir*.

During the reign of Shah Jahan, Mithila came into prominence. Some important nobles like Mirza Abdul Rasul Khan (founder of Mohalla Rasulpur at Darbhanga), Nawab Sajawar Khan and Mirza Abdul Mali (or Mirza Khan) were the *faujdars* of Darbhanga. It is said that during the time of Sundar Thakur (who succeeded Narayan Thakur), Mithila was resurveyed and a fresh rate of revenue was prepared.[68]

Sundar Thakur built a palace for himself to the north of Darbhanga, which came to be known as Sundarpur. He was also known for his liberal-mindedness. He also built a tank in the village of Adalpura Bhalpatti in Raghavapur *pargana* known as Sundar Sugar.[69]

Although we do not know the exact period during which Sundar Thakur held the office of *chaudhari* and *qanungo*, going by the *farman* of Aurangzeb (1665) and a letter dated 1666 written by him to Laskar Khan, the governor of Bihar, it appears that he held the office uptil 1660. Both the documents refer to the assistance rendered by Mahinath Thakur to the imperial forces during the conquests of Palamau and Morang. We know that Palamau was conquered in 1661;[70] therefore, it seems that Sundar Thakur's period of *chaudhari* was not beyond 1660. In one of the *farmans* dated 1657, the right of *nankar* of the village of Malangia in the Tirhut *pargana*, was granted to Sundar Thakur.[71]

According to the *mahzarnama* of Sundar Thakur (1652), it appears that even the share of Gopal Thakur had been purchased from the legal heirs. The statement in it closes with an account of how the two-thirds share of Gopal Thakur and Parmanand Thakur came into his hands.[72] He was the first chief of the Darbhanga Raj who by purchase and conquest, as mentioned above, brought the entire resources of the family into his hands, which not only strengthened his position but also paved the way for the establishment of a full-fledged *zamindari* in the time of his son and successor, Mahinath Thakur.

Mahinath Thakur, the eldest son of Sundar Thakur, succeeded to the office of the *chaudhari* of Tirhut during the reign of Aurangzeb. During the same period, he attained the dignity of a big *zamindar* as Mahinath

Thakur revived extensive royal favours.

The most serious problem faced by Mahinath Thakur was the hostile attitude of Raja Gaj Simha of Simraon[73] who had obtained the title of 'Raja' from Shah Jahan. The latter had built a strong fortress in Simraon (or Sugaon). Mahinath Thakur attacked him and a battle ensued in which Raja Gaj Simha was defeated.[74] However, he escaped from the fort and sent the *zamindar* of Sheohar as his emissary for a negotiated settlement. He offered to secede the *pargana* of Babara in Champaran in exchange for the fortress of Simraon. Mahinath Thakur agreed to this proposal and the deal was finally accepted.[75]

During the reign of Aurangzeb, Mirza Khan, Fidai Khan and Shaikh Mohammad Jiwan were the *faujdars* of Darbhanga. The chief of Palamau and the *zamindars* of Morang (the Terai area now in Nepal) continued to harass officials and disregarded the imperial authority. The emperor took the matter seriously and ordered the *faujdar* of Darbhanga and the *chaudhari* of the Khandavala dynasty of Tirhut to take action against these recalcitrant elements. An army under the command of Mirza Khan, along with Mahinath Thakur, invaded Palamau, defeated the chief and captured the fort.[76]

Similarly, to punish the *zamindar* of Morang, a combined army of Mirza Khan and Ali Vardi Khan of Gorakhpur, along with the contingent of Mahinath Thakur under the command of his younger brother, Narapati Thakur, launched an attack on the stronghold of Morang and in a pitched battle, defeated it (1644). Mirza Khan, however, died in the course of the battle.[77] It appears that Mahinath Thakur had deputed Narapati Thakur to help the Mughal forces.[78] The emperor was pleased with the services rendered by Mahinath Thakur in this campaign and honoured him with favours and rewards. A *farman* was issued to him. This, as well as the letter of Emperor Aurangzeb to Laskar Khan, the governor of Bihar (discussed earlier), gives an idea of the services rendered by Mahinath Thakur in these campaigns. As a reward, he got the Tirhut *sarkar*, including the valley of the mountain (the sub-Himalayan tract to the north). He was given 110 *parganas* in Bengal and Bihar. Besides, he was also honoured with the grant of a *khillat* and *mahi maratib*.

Mahinath Thakur was a great patron of Maithili literature. It was under his patronage that Lochan Kavi wrote the book *Rajatarangini*,[79] which describes the literary and social conditions of the time. Lochan Kavi also wrote *Naisadha Karya*, which is available in the Raj Library, Darbhanga.

As Mahinath Thakur had no male heir, he adopted his younger brother, Narapati Thakur, as his son and successor. He prepared a will in which Narapati Thakur was declared as his successor. The English translation runs as follows:[80]

To Babu Shri Narapati Thakur, the abode of all good (may you live long) may prosperity attend you-blessings. I, Shriman Mahinath Singh Thakur commanded on account of ill health, I do not find my strength in me and so I intend to go to and remain at Banaras. I have therefore, given to you the Raj of Tirhut, the pargana of Dharampur and all the moveable and immoveable properties with the *Malikana Dasturi* which you shall enjoy, I have made you my successor.[81]

On the basis of the will of Mahinath Thakur, after the former's death, Narapati Thakur succeeded to the throne of the Darbhanga Raj in 1690.[82] He was a brave man and showed valour on many occasions. He led his brother's army in support of the imperial forces in the campaign of Palamau and Morang soon after taking over the reins of the Darbhanga Raj.

Narapati Thakur was faced with the hostile activities of the *raja* of Makwanpur, a petty chieftain in the Nepal Terai. The latter had annexed Tantar, Janakpur and twenty-three other *mahals* of Mithila during the period of the decline of the Oinwara dynasty. The *zamindars* of Tirhut continued to make efforts to bring the lost territories back under their control and ultimately succeeded in forcing the chief of Makwanpur to accept his subordination to them, as well as an assurance to pay an annual tribute. However, in 1675, the chief of Makwanpur declared his independence again and stopped paying tribute or *nazrana* to the Khandavala family.[83]

After informing the *subedar* of Bihar about these developments, Narapati Thakur, along with the other *zamindars* of the area, attacked the *raja* of Makwanpur on the pretence of hunting and took him prisoner. He was brought to Darbhanga and presented before the *faujdar*. The *raja* was released and his *zamindari* given back to him after he accepted Islam and agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 1,200 (in kind in the form of elephants) to Narapati Thakur.[84]

Narapati Thakur had his residence in the village of Rahika in the Madhubani subdivision. His wife, Urvasi Thakurani, had built the Urvasesvara Mahadeva Temple in that village, which was known as Urvasinatha. An inscription on the temple of Jaladhari confirms this (the temple was in a ruined condition when Raja Rameshwar Sinha got it repaired and renovated). Narapati Thakur got imperial help to equip his fort in Bhaura with arms and ammunition.[85] It appears that during the reign of Aurangzeb, Fidai Khan, the governor of Bihar, granted him two important market towns Ramchowk Bazar and Bara Bazar in Darbhanga.[86]

Like Mahinath Thakur, Narapati Thakur was also a great poet and lover of Maithili literature. He similarly patronized Lochan Kavi and others. When he became old and his health began to fail, he decided to retire to Varanasi like his predecessors after handing over the *zamindari* to his oldest son, Raghava Singh, by executing a will in his favour. The will runs as follows (1699–1701):

I have now become old and constantly getting illness more and more so I am going to remain in the holy place (Benares). I have given you the Raj of Tirhut, the *pargana* of Dharampur and all the moveable and immoveable properties with the *Malikana Dasturi*. You shall enjoy them and I have given to Babu Shri Sheonandan Singh, Babu Shri Raghonandan Singh and Babu Shri Thakur Singh, all your brothers, certain pieces of lands for their maintenance in respect of which documents with details have been executed, you shall maintain them intact.

Narapati Thakur died in 1701 after a reign of eleven years.[87] He was succeeded by his oldest son, Raja Raghava Singh, in 1701. Raghava Singh established friendly relations with the governor of Bihar and managed his *zamindari* efficiently during the remaining period of Aurangzeb's reign. In 1720, Nawab Murshid Quli Khan conferred upon him the title of 'Raja'. He had acquired the *patta mukarrari* (an agreement), of the *sarkar* of Tirhut at an annual *jama* of Rs. 1 lakh.[88] The *raja* also used to pay Rs. 50,000 to Dharnidhar, the *diwan* of Nawab Mahabat Jung (Murshid Quli Khan).[89] Fakhr-ud-Daula succeeded Nasrat Yar Khan as the governor of Bihar in 1727. He remained in this post for five years. Raja Raghava Singh was subordinate to him.[90] Ali Vardi Khan succeeded Fakhr-ud-Daula as the new deputy governor of Bengal in 1733 and then as *subedar* of Bengal in 1740.

During this period, Tirhut was plagued by the Banjaras (the corn merchants) who disguised as peaceful traders and travellers, plundered the region. They created disturbances in Awadh, Gorakhpur, Ghazipur, Betia, Bhuara (Bhanwara in Tirhut). Bhuara was their *jagir* where they maintained 80,000 horses and foot soldiers. They had also one lakh oxen and pretended that they were doing business. Ali Vardi Khan ordered Diwan Chintaman Das, Hedayat Ali Khan and Karim Khan Afghan to chastise the rebels. The Banjaras fled to the hills of Mukwanpur in the Nepal Terai, which was famous for difficult region. Karim Khan was helped by the *raja* of Betia in his mission. He ascended to the hill-forts whereupon the Banjaras fled towards the passes of Mukwanpur. Karim Khan captured 20,000 horses and much booty from the Banjaras. When he reached Hajipur, Ali Vardi Khan crossed the Ganges and took a portion of the spoils by force from him. Karim Khan also distributed some booty among his soldiers.[91] It appears that around 5,000 of Banjaras were killed. Thus, Ali Vardi Khan was able to eliminate the Banjaras from Tirhut with the help of his capable commanders like Karim Khan Afghan and Hedayat Ali Khan.

Raja Raghava Singh of Tirhut remained loyal to the nawab of Bengal and served him throughout his reign. He was succeeded by his son, Vishnu Singh, who had no issue. After his death in 1743 his brother, Narendra Singh (1743–60), succeeded to the throne.[92] It was during his reign that Tirhut was subjected to a revision of

assessment.[93] It is said that Ali Vardi Khan's forces came down heavily on the *raja* on account of his delaying the payment of tribute to the nawab of Bengal in 1753 although the local tradition points out that the nawab's forces were routed by Raja Narendra Singh.[94] During the period of Raja Narendra Singh, the Darbhanga Raj assumed a somewhat semi-independent chieftainship as he had stopped remitting revenue to the deputy governor of Bihar for some years.[95] Another reference mentions that Narendra Singh was a good friend of Ali Vardi Khan. Raja Narendra Singh received *nankar* grants from Ali Vardi Khan between 1748 and 1754 and these were confirmed by the later nawabs of Bengal. It appears that Ali Vardi Khan granted the *dasturat* (customary reward or payment) on the condition that he would collect the revenue for the *suba* authority and serve its interest in the area. The collections of *dasturat* were one-fourth share from each *mauza* (village); one *ana* (1/4) per rupee and 2 per cent interest on each *kabuliyat*. He was also granted *malikana* rights of 10 per cent on his *zamindari*. Raja Narendra Singh also visited Murshidabad and had acquired rights over various places. He gave land grants to various Brahmans, *mahants*, *fakirs* and other needy people.[96] He died without any issue in 1760. He adopted Pratap Singh as his son, who was descendant from the family of Narayan Thakur, the son of Subhankar Thakur.

Pratap Singh, after his succession to the throne in 1760, shifted the capital from Bhawara to Darbhanga where Pratap family had lived. He died in 1775 and was succeeded by Raja Madhava Singh (1775–1807). During his period, relation between him and the East India Company became strained over the question of the permanent settlement of his estate. The grant of *sadui* was confirmed by Kasim Ali Khan but during the period of Raja Madhava Singh in 1792, the *nankar* lands, the *dasturat* and the *malikana* were resumed by the government. Only ten villages were assigned for subsistence to the *rani* of Raja Narendra Singh, two villages to Madhu Singh, the brother of Pratap Singh and Rs. 1,000 per month to the *raja* himself.[97] According to Bathurst a British official, the Company later tried to settle most of the *sarkars* of Tirhut with the *raja* but he was not capable of managing his *zamindari* properly.[98]

Raja Madhava Singh petitioned for the restoration of his *dasturat,* which had been taken away by the British government on the charge of not clearing his arrears. An enquiry was set up and an investigation was done. As the *sanad* was conditional, Raja Madhava Singh refused to petition to the British. The Raja produced a detailed statement related to his collection of *dasturat* and its disbursement and the amount of eight years' arrears was estimated at around Rs. 1,93,000. The government paid no heed to it. He again petitioned the Governor-

General of India and appealed to him that his *zamindari* be restored as injustice had been done to him. He declined to make any kind of settlement with the British government unless his *malikana* and *dasturat* were restored. However, in 1790, his *zamindari* was settled with Faizuddin and Barkatullah Khan.[99] In 1791, Faizuddin resigned from this responsibility and blamed Madhava Singh for persuading the ryots to withhold the revenue payment due to which he was only able to collect Rs. 6,000 out of Rs. 24,000. The British Collector asked Raja Madhava Singh to take responsibility for the settlement. He also told him that Faizuddin had resigned and Barkatullah had died after falling from his horse at Patna, and the latter's successors had refused to take the estate on lease (*ijara*).* Raja Madhava Singh also refused to take the responsibility to the collection of revenue and the responsibility was assigned to a number of *thikadars* during 1793 to 1800.[100] In 1800, the *raja* was again asked to make a settlement of Rs. 168,506 after deducting the amount of his *malikana* and *dasturat.* He refused the terms and offered Rs. 148,227 only for his *mukarrari*. His *zamindari* was again given on *ijara* but the *raja* soon agreed to offer an increase of Rs. 10,000. The Board of Revenue restored his *zamindari* to him.[101] The following is an observation about the strained relations between Raja Madhava Singh and the Company, made by Jata Shankar Jha in his book, *Biography of an Indian Patriot Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga*:

> It seems that the main reason of misunderstanding between the Raja Madhava Singh of Darbhanga and the Company during these few years was the result of the administrative changes. The *rajas* of Darbhanga had for all practical purposes come to be regarded as the master of the whole *sarkar* of Tirhut. They had acquired a number of privileges either on the basis of some imperial *farmans* or by the right of might. Even for some years after the acquisition of the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the East India Company, the *rajas* of Darbhanga continued to enjoy most of the privileges. It would have certainly appeared a very unusual thing in the eyes of both the *raja* and his people when the allowances of Raja Pratap Singh were for the first time stopped to liquidate the balances of the *mukarari* settlement. Later on it became a regular feature with the government to stop his *malikana dastur* and other allowances for the realization of government revenues. The prestige of Raja Madhava Singh suffered a great deal when his authority was not only set at naught but his request also could not prevent an ordinary peon of the Adalat from arresting his managers on most flimsy grounds…. Financially too the *raja* suffered much. Most of the perquisites enjoyed since the time of his forefathers were stopped. Even in case of payment it was made after a long vexatious procedure. Rents were levied on lands which the family had hitherto enjoyed as revenue free, and in the event of refusal they were resumed. Raja Madhava Singh who had been his predecessors as rulers of the land naturally resented his reduced position (of a *zamindar*) under the present regime. The new regime was not prepared to recognize his former status and the *raja* was not willing to content himself with the role assigned to him, and his explains the estrangement of their relationship.[102]

Raja Madhava Singh was a man of wisdom and understanding. He

was concerned about his people and took various welfare measures for them. In his period, the Darbhanga Raj developed and prospered a lot. Raja Madhava Singh was impressed with the capability and capacity of his *diwan*, Lala Jivan Ram and, therefore, granted him *mauzas* (villages) Hariharpur and Mirzapur in *pargana* Bharwara.[103]

Madhava Singh died in 1807 and left behind five sons Kishan Singh died without any issue while Chhatara Singh (1807–39) succeeded him. The other sons were Kirat Singh, Gobind Singh and Rampat Singh. Chhatara Singh lived till 1839. During his period the relationship between the Raj and the East India Company improved a lot. He rendered valuable service to the British government during the Anglo-Nepalese war (1812) and was conferred the title of 'Maharaja' in September 1815.[104] In 1839, on account of his old age and incapacity to rule, he handed over his entire property to his eldest son, Rudra Singh. To his younger son, Basdeo Singh, he gave villages in the *pargana* of Jarail, four houses, two elephants and apartments in the family house for his maintenance. After the death of Raja Chhatara Singh, his brother, Kirat Singh, obtained the *pargana* of Jabdi; Gobind Singh, the *pargana* of Paharpur, Raghu and Rampat Singh the *pargana* of Pachahi.[105] Basdeo Singh claimed half of the Raj but another claimant was his brother, Rudra Singh. Raja Rudra Singh was determined that the Raj not be divided. Basdeo Singh put a petition in the District Court of Tirhut and claimed Rs. 24,46,958. Ultimately, the case was decided in favour of Rudra Singh and the court asked Basdeo Singh to keep the *pargana* of Jarail for his maintenance.[106] Raja Rudra Singh succeeded to the throne in 1839 and died in 1850. He was very brave and courageous. Rudra Singh had built one very strong brick bridge over the Mohani River, which survived for many centuries. He also built a few temples and ponds.[107] Rudra Singh had four sons: Maheshwar Singh, Ganeshwar Singh, Nitreshwar Singh and Gopeshwar Singh. Maheshwar Singh became the *raja* in 1850 and ruled till 1860 at Jhanjharpur where the family resided. It was during his period that the great rebellion of 1857 broke out in the country. His activities on this occasion were viewed by the British government with great suspicion and distrust. He agreed to help the latter only when a fine of Rs. 1,000 per day was imposed on him. His offer of the services of his sepoys was, however, not accepted.[108] On 20 October 1860, the *maharaja* died leaving behind two sons, Lakshmishwar Singh and Rameshwar Singh and a daughter.[109] As the sons were minors, the Court of Wards took charge of the estate. Lakshmishwar Singh and Rameshwar Singh went to Varanasi to get an education in the English-medium colleges. When the Court of Wards took control of the chieftaincy, they built some magnificent buildings for the princes to reside in. Some gardens like Rambagh, Sheyama Bagh and

Dilkhushkun Bagh were created for them. A very beautiful garden named Anand Bagh was also constructed and a market was created with the help of engineers.[110] The chieftaincy fell into a debt of around Rs. 70 lakh while the revenue was only Rs. 16 lakh. After a few years, Raja Lakshmishwar Singh succeeded to the throne and ruled till 1898.

According to the *Ain-i-Tirhut*, the *zamindari* of the Darbhanga Raj extended to the districts of Tirhut, Munger, Purnea and Bhagalpur. In Tirhut, it covered areas like the *parganas* of Jarail, Hati, Alampur, Baddaur, Bhaur, Dharaur, Gopalpur and Panch-mahal the area of Naridigar in Bhagalpur; the Dharampur *pargana* in Purnea and Haveli Kharagpur in the districts of Munger and Bhagalpur.[111] According to the official document, available in *mahafizkhana*, of the Darbhanga Raj, the annual income of the chieftaincy was Rs. 21,73,435 in 1879. However, when Bihari Lal Fitrat, the author of *Ain-i-Tirhut,* asked Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh about the annual income of the Darbhanga *zamindari*, he gave an estimate of around Rs. 25 lakh for the same period.[112]

NOTES

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H.S. Jarrett, Kolkata, The Asiatic Society, 2010, vol. II, p. 168.
2. S.N. Singh, *History of Tirhut: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Nine-teenth* Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1922, pp. 2–3.
3. R.N. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), Delhi, Capital Publishing House, 1987, p. 1.
4. Stephen Henningham, ‘Agrarian Relations in North Bihar, Peasant Protest and the Darbhanga Raj 1919–20’, *IESHR*, XVII, 77.
5. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793)*, pp. 1–2.
6. The Karnatas were the rulers of Mithila before Oinwara dynasty.
7. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793)*, p. 4.
8. Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us-Salatin (A History of Bengalp)*, tr. Maulvi Abdus Salam, Bibliotheca Indica, 1890, p. 136.
9. Ibid.
10. Jata Shankar Jha, ‘History of Darbhanga Raj’, *JBRS*, vol. XLVIII, pt. I, 1962, p. 14.

11. Ibid.
12. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, 'Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj (1574–1666), based on some Contemporary and Unpublished Documents', *IHRC*, vol. 36, pt. II, 1961, pp. 89–90.
13. Ibid., pp. 90–1.
14. Bakshi Mukund Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, Benares, Vidya Vilas Press, 1950, p. 59 (Maithili work).
15. B.P. Ambashthya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556–1605),* Patna, KPJRI, 1997, p. 71.
16. Once, Mahesh Thakur along with his pupil, Raghunandan Jha, visited Garha Katanga to participate in a religious discourse. The famous Rani Durgavati also took part in it. Raghunandan Jha somehow incurred the displeasure of the Rani and they left the palace (Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 15).
17. According to the *Ain-i-Tirhut*, Akbar also granted the title of 'Pandit Rai' to Raghunandan Jha (Bihari Lal Fitrat, *Tawarikh-i-Fitrat or Ain-i-Tirhut*, Lucknow, Bahar Kashmir, 1883, p. 28, (Urdu text).
18. Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, pp. 56–8. According to Stephen Henningham, Mahesh Thakur sent his pupil Raghunandan Jha to the Mughal court. Jha won favour by warning that a tree overhanging the emperor's tent would get destroyed in a storm. The tent was moved to a safer location and a short while lightening felled the tree. Akbar conferred an income of 2 per cent of the Tirhut revenues on Jha, who transferred the grant to Mahesh Thakur (Stephen Henningham, *A Great Estate and its Landlords in Colonial India: Darbhanga (1860–1942*), Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 18).
19. The *farman* has been quoted by Qeyamuddin Ahmad. See Ahmad, 'Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj 1574–16, based on some Contemporary and Unpublished Documents', pp. 92–3.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 21.
23. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut,* pp. 30–1.
24. Subhankar Thakur had three sons from his three wives. From the first, he had Purushottam, from the second, he had Narayan and Sundar Thakur and from the third, Raghuram.
25. Ahmad, 'Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj 1574–1666, based on some Contemporary and unpublished Documents', pp. 94–5.
26. The sub-Himalayan jungle tract on the north-eastern border of Bihar was

known as Morang.

27. A kind of rent-free grant of land.

28. Ahmad, 'Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj 1574–1666, based on some Contemporary and Unpublished Documents', pp. 96–7.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ahmad, 'Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj 1574–1666, based on some Contemporary and Unpublished Documents', pp, 96–7.

32. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut* or *Tawarikh-i-Fitrat,* p. 27.

33. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793)*, p. 45.

34. Ibid.

35. The Oinwaras were the former ruling family of Tirhut.

36. Jha, *Mithila Bashamaya Itihas,* pp. 69–70.

37. Ibid., p. 72.

38. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 26.

39. Ambashthya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556–1605)*, p. 74.

40. Parmeshwar Jha, *Mithila Tattwa Vimarsha*, Darbhanga, Purvardha, 1949, p. 7.

41. J. Bryne, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Purnea, 1901–1908*, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1908, p. 108.

42. V.A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul 1542–1605,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1917, p. 486. The preserved manuscript appears to have been written by Mahesh Thakur in about the year 1950. But it seems that it is only a copy of the original one written during the lifetime of Akbar. A photocopy of the manuscript is now preserved in the Library, Darbhanga.

43. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793)*, p. 45.

44. Ibid.

45. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 26.

46. The name of the Hemangad Thakur's work is *Rahu Prag Panji,* which is an account of Khandavala family.

47. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 26.

48. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari,* tr. H. Blochmann, Kolkata, The Asiatic Society, 2010, vol. I, p. 352.
49. This was the family or dynasty of Mahesh Thakur.
50. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, p. 180.
51. See the above-mentioned *farman* given to Gopal Thakur (pp. 200–1).
52. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793)*, p. 49.
53. Ambashthaya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556–1605)*, p. 233.
54. Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, p. 100.
55. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 27.
56. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), p. 49.
57. Ibid.
58. Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, p. 113. Also see Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', p. 25.
59. Ambashthaya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556–1605)*, p. 233.
60. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', pp. 28–9.
61. Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, pp. 113–15.
62. Ibid., p. 134.
63. S.N. Singh expresses his doubts whether Narayan Thakur ever assumed the office of Chaudhari (Singh, *History ofTirhut: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 317).
64. Ibid.
65. The *mahzarnama* is already mentioned earlier.
66. The *mahzarnama* states that Gunakar Thakur, the son of Purusottam Thakur and Hariram Thakur, son of Raghuram Thakur, 'have sold their shares in the names of Narayan Thakur and myself (Sundar Thakur) … we two also continue to possess our own share in it'.
67. H.M. Elliot & John Dowson, eds., *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians,* vol. VII, London, Trübner and Co., 1877, pp. 137–8.
68. Parameshwar Jha, *Mithila Tattwa Vimarsha*, pp. 29–30. Chaudhary, *Political*

History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793), p. 53.

69. Chaudhary, ibid., p. 54.

70. For details, see the chapter on the Palamau Chieftaincy.

71. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), p. 54

72. See the *mahzarnama* of Sundar Thakur, mentioned earlier.

73. According to Parmeshwar Jha, Raja Gaj Simha was the son of Ugrasen Singh, the founder of the Bettiah Raj (see the Betia Raj chapter as well).

74. Singh, *History of Tirhut: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 217. Also Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, p. 156.

75. Jha, ibid., pp. 156–7.

76. The subjugation of Palamau has been mentioned in the chapter on the Chero Chieftancy in detail.

77. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), p. 56.

78. R.K. Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut (1206–1765*), Varanasi, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1970, pp. 164–8.

79. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), p. 60.

80. It is available in the *Mahafizkhana,* Darbhanga Raj.

81. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', pp. 33–4. It is also available in the *Mahafizkhana,* Darbhanga Raj.

82. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), p. 61.

83. Ibid.

84. Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, p. 158.

85. Ibid., pp. 157–8.

86. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556–1793*), p. 62.

87. Ibid.

88. Fitra, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p.33.

89. Ibid. It is also recorded that someone complained to the provincial

administration that the *jama mukarrari* that had been fixed for the Darbhanga Raj was less. Therefore, the amount was increased to Rs. 7, 69,200 (Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 33).

90. Dinesh Chandra Sircar, 'A Sanskrit Maithili Document of the time of Emperor Muhammad Shah AD 1730', *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings of Meetings*, vol. XVIII, New Delhi, Government of India Press, 1942, p. 87.

91. Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnama,* tr. Jadunath Sarkar, *Bengal Past and Present*, Calcutta, Calcutta Historical Society, 1946–7, vol. LXVI, pp. 68–9.

92. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 34. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Tirhut and Champaran, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1976, vol. XIII, p. 210.

93. Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut (1206–1765)*, p. 182.

94. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 34. Lalkavi was the court poet of Raja Narendra Singh. He notes that the *raja's* forces routed the forces of the nawab of Bengal.

95. Jata Shankar Jha, *Biography of an Indian Patriot Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga*, Patna, Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh Smarak Samiti, 1972, pp. 3–4.

96. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 34.

97. Ibid.

98. W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal,* Tirhut and Champaran, vol. XIII, pp. 210–11.

99. Ibid., pp. 211–12.

100. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 36.

101. Ibid. pp. 35–6.

102. Jha, *Biography of an Indian Patriot Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga*, pp. 4–5.

103. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 37.

104. Ibid., p. 38. From the seal which is available in the Raj office, it seems that Raja Chhatara Singh was the first who used the title 'Maharaja'.

105. Ibid., p. 37.

106. Ibid., p. 38. Ganesh Dutt, the son of Gobind Singh, had also appealed to the *diwani* court for the division of the *zamindari* but his petition was dismissed (see p. 38).

107. Ibid., p. 39.

108.

Ibid., p. 40.

109. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, pp. 212–13.

110. Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut*, p. 41.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p. 42. Once the *maharaja* of Darbhanga asked Hindus to learn from the strong bonding of the Muslim community: We Hindus however, have one thing to learn from Mohammadans…. With them religion is still a living principle and acts as a strong bond of union. There is discipline in their society: and there is recognition of social leadership (presidential speech of the *maharaja* of Darbhanga, Calcutta Convention of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandala on 28 December 1906, *The Tribune,* 30 December 1906).

* Meaning of some portion is obscure here.

* Here, some words are illegible.

* A person who takes the estate on lease (*ijara*), bears the profit and loss on it and deposits the state revenue on the basis of document.

CHAPTER 8

The Betia Raj

The Betia Raj, another important chieftaincy of north Bihar, comprised the *mahals* of Samru, Mehsi and Majhora in the *sarkar* of Champaran.[1] Abul Fazl mentions Udai Karan as the *zamindar* of Champaran[2] but has not described the exact location and extent of the Betia chieftaincy. Since there is no reference to any other chief in Champaran at the time of Akbar, we may assume that Udai Karan was the leading chief of area holding the bulk of it known by this name.

The term Champaran was applied to a wide tract of land covered with Champa trees. Abul Fazl informs us that 'in the sarkar of Champaran, the seed of the Vetch Mash (*Phaseolus radiatus*) is cast on unploughed soil where it grows without labour or tilling. Long pepper grows wild in its forest.'[3] The *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Champaran* record Betia Raj as a prominent chieftaincy which covered a vast area during the eighteenth century. The chieftaincy had its *zamindari* in the Champaran district which was divided into circles, i.e. Rajpore Sihoria, Betia, Motihari, Peepra and Turkaulia. Besides, it also possesses land properties in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Patna, Saran in Bihar and Mirzapur, Allahabad, Basti, Gorakhpur, Faizabad and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. It was spread over an area of 14,43,073 acres (1,824 square miles).[4]

The Betia chiefs were Brahmins who traced their origin from the Oinwara dynasty (1325–1527), which had established the Simraon Raj in Mithila.[5] The Oinwara dynasty was established during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq (1325)[6] and continued till 1527, when Nusrat Shah, the ruler of Bengal, attacked Mithila and killed Kansanarayana, the last Oinwara chief. Thereafter, chaos and confusion prevailed in the Mithila region and the Oinwara dynasty declined.

It is said that a major portion of northern Bihar, including Champaran and Tirhut, originally formed a part of the Mithila kingdom. But with the downfall of the Oinwara dynasty in the early sixteenth century, the entire area was parcelled out among a number of petty chiefs.[7] The Betia Raj seems to have been one of them.

Gangeswar Dev was the founder of this chieftaincy. The other chiefs of the Raj were Makeswar Dev, Raja Dev, Dhanoraj, Udaikaran Raj, Jadhu Raj, Ugrasen Singh and Raja Gaj Singh but we fail to get a detailed account about any of these chiefs in contemporary or even later historical works.[8] However, on the basis of a few references in Mughal chronicles as well as some family records, we have attempted to reconstruct the history of the Betia chieftaincy.

Emperor Babur, in his memoirs, mentions Champaran as an independent estate and gives its revenue estimate as 1,90,86,060 *tankas*.[9] He makes no reference to the rulers of Champaran, though.

During Emperor Humayun's reign too, Betia *zamindars* had no contact with the Mughal court. The first reference to a Betia *zamindar* occurs during the Mughal campaign against the Afghans of Bihar. Abul Fazl writes that Udai Karan offered his submission and joined Muzaffar Khan Turbati, the governor of the *suba*, to recapture Hajipur,[10] which had been occupied by a band of Afghans led by Taj Khan Panwar, Sulaiman Panwar, Fath Khan Musavai, Shahbaz Khan *Arbi* and Than Rai. These Afghans had killed about a 100 troopers, including Muhammad Shaukati, who was holding Hajipur on behalf of Muzaffar Khan Turbati. Udai Karan helped the imperial army to cross the swollen river Gandak under cover of darkness at some distance to the north of Hajipur. The enemy was taken by surprise and suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the imperial army. The fort of Hajipur was captured.[11]

In 1576–7, Raja Udai Karan again helped Muzaffar Khan Turbati in his campaign against the Afghan chiefs of the Chota Nagpur region.[12] After reaching Chota Nagpur, he came to know that the Afghan had assembled at Basai, which was about 45 miles southeast of Ranchi. With the help of Raja Udai Karan who knew the topography of the area, Muzaffar Khan was able to reach Basai and defeated a band of 4,000 Afghans in a surprise attack. The Afghans fled into the nearby forests. Udai Karan once again helped the Mughal army to trace the enemy in the forest and completely defeated them in a pitched battle. The Mughal armies also succeeded in capturing the Afghan chiefs, Yusuf Mati, Adam and Chuna, and also took possession of their strongholds.

Thereafter, during the reign of Emperors Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, we hardly get any reference to Betia chiefs in contemporary accounts. However, W.W. Hunter, on the basis of some local records, writes that during the reign of Shah Jahan, Raja Jay Singh, the son of Raja Ugrasen Singh, was granted the title of 'Raja' by the emperor.[13] More details about this or the activities of the *raja* have not been provided by him.

During the reign of Aurangzeb, we do not find any reference to the

Betia chieftaincy. However, from later references, it appears that the chieftaincy continued to exist throughout the Mughal empire and became one of the important chieftaincies during the first half of the eighteenth century in Bihar. In 1694, after the death of Raja Jay Singh, the *zamindari* was divided among his three sons, Dalip Singh, Onithi Singh and Shatrajit Singh. Dalip Singh got the Betia Raj, Onithi Singh was given Sheohar and Shatrajit Singh founded the Madhuban family in the *pargana* of Mehsi. Dalip Singh ruled till 1715 and was succeeded by his son, Raja Dhrup Singh, who ruled till 1763.

We also get a reference to the Betia Raj's conflict with its neighbouring chieftaincy of Darbhanga. As mentioned in the chapter on the Darbhanga chieftaincy, Mahesh Thakur laid claim over some areas of Mithila, which was under the control of the Betia chief-taincy. This was strongly resented by the Betia chiefs and, consequently, several skirmishes took place between both sides of armed retainers. However, Mahesh Thakur tried to settle the dispute with Raja Udai Karan, the chief of the Betia Raj, by giving up his claim over some of these regions.[14] Relations between the two states were again strained during the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign when Raja Gaj Singh built a strong fort at Betia. Raja Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga considered the action of Gaj Singh as a hostile act and launched a powerful attack on the Betia fort. Gaj Singh was completely defeated and the fort was captured by Mahinath Thakur.[15] Raja Gaj Singh now opened negotiations with Mahinath Thakur through the Babu of Sheohar for a settlement.[16] He offered to withdraw his forces from the *pargana* of Babra in Champaran provided the fort of Sugaon was returned to him. Mahinath Thakur agreed to his request and the deal was finally settled,[17] and the friendly relations between the two states were restored. After some time, Mahinath Thakur presented the Babra *pargana* to the daughter (name is not mentioned) of Raja Bhupa Singh[18] at the time of her marriage to the Babu of Sheohar. This grant once again became a cause of conflict between the chieftaincies of the Betia and Darbhanga. Dhrup Singh, the grandson of Raja Gaj Singh, forcefully took over the Babra *pargana* from the Babu of Sheohar soon after becoming the ruler of Betia. Raja Raghav Singh, the chieftain of Darbhanga, immediately dispatched a strong contingent of his retainers under Sardar Khan who defeated Dhrup Singh and compelled him to return the *pargana* to the Babu of Sheohar. Disputes between the two neighbouring chieftains continued even after the death of Aurangzeb and helped Ali Vardi Khan in suppressing the rebellions of the *zamindars* of north Bihar and restoring peace in the area.[19] When Ali Vardi Khan was knocking at the doors of Betia, there was a quarrel between Raja Dhrub Singh of Betia and Raja Raghav Singh of Darbhanga. Ali Vardi Khan deputed Nawab Shahawat Jang against the

raja of Betia during 1734-5 and took effective measures against the refractory *zamindars* of Tirhut. The *raja* of Betia had rebelled against the nawab of Bengal which was why Ali Vardi Khan appointed Shahawat Jang to chastise the *raja*. Karim Khan was appointed to support Shahawat Jang. The entire region was covered with dense forest and was very difficult to assess. Shawahat Jang faced a lot of difficulty in clearing the forest before they reached the fort of the *raja* where he had taken a strong position. Shawahat Jang laid siege to the fort and dug a mine under its tower. Dhrub Singh, the *raja* of Betia, was defeated and brought under subjection. According to the *Muzaffarnama*, the *raja* implored Ali Vardi Khan through his queen and so was allowed to return to his palace. It seems that after his defeat, the *raja* had fled from his palace. This victory also led to great honours for Karim Khan.[20] Thus, Ali Vardi Khan was able to bring the refractory chief of the Betia Raj under his control.[21]

Ali Vardi Khan then sent an army against the Banjaras of the *mahal* of Betia. The Banjara tribe used to assemble in numbers of about 8,000 horse and foot soldiers, leading a lakh of oxen with them on the pretext of buying and selling rice. They used to plunder whichever area they visited. Thus, they had plundered parts of Awadh, Gorakhpur, Hajipur and Bhunara. Ali Vardi Khan, on hearing the news of their advance, ordered Diwan Chintaman Das with Hidayat Ali Khan and 4,000 horsemen under the command of Abdul Karim Khan to chastise this tribe. The Banjaras were defeated and the entire region was brought in live.[22]

Thus, it appears that relations between the two states of Betia and Darbhanga did not remain cordial for long. Hostilities between them resulted in frequent skirmishes, and loss of life and property on both sides. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, Raja Anand Kishore of Betia and Raja Chhatara Singh of Darbhanga sorted out their differences completely and established a mutually friendly relationship.

In 1759, Khadim Hussain Khan, the *faujdar* of Purnea, rebelled against Mir Jafar, the nawab of Bengal and joined Prince Ali Gauhar (future Shah Alam II, the son of Alamgir II). When the prince left Bihar after some time, the expedition was led against Khadim Hussain Khan. The rebel fled towards Betia. Khan Miran, the governor of Bihar, along with the British forces under the command of Caillaud followed him to Betia. In this expedition against Khadim Hussain, Khan Miran died tragically. Caillaud, halted at Betia for a few days. The *raja* of Betia came to him and submitted, and paid the arrears of revenue due to the nawab of Bengal. Khadim Hussain Khan speedily fled from Betia to Gorakhpur.[23]

During March 1762 when Mir Qasim was the nawab of Bengal, he

sent an expedition against the *zamindar* of Betia who had stopped paying revenue to him. The nawab wanted to bring the *zamindar* of Betia under his control, and was also determined to establish peace and order in the region. He sent a large force under the command of Bahadur Ali Khan[24] who was able to capture the strong fortress of Betia and establish peace and order in the area. The *raja* paid Rs. 6 to 7 lakh to the nawab's treasury as the government revenue.[25]

When the East India Company obtained possession of the *diwani* rights of Bengal in 1765, the area of Champaran was estimated at 2,546 sq. miles and the revenue as £ 34,000. Champaran was settled by the sons of Jugal Kishore Singh, the chief of Betia Raja. It is difficult to ascertain the actual assessed revenue of the district when the British took the chieftaincy under their control in 1765 but it is roughly estimated at around Rs. 2 crore. It also appears that the chief of Betia had not paid any amount to the British except for some timber. The Company's governor had written a letter to the *raja* and asking him to clear his dues or else the English troops would march to *raja's* chieftaincy. The *raja*, though did not clear the revenue dues and rebelled against the British. The Company deputed the British forces under the command of Robert Barker against him.[26] In one of the battles, the *raja* was defeated and fled to Bundelkhand. His chieftaincy was captured and brought under the direct management of the Company in 1765. The Company's attempt to manage the estate, though, proved a complete failure. It faced difficulties as the production of revenue grew less and less, and so it requested Jugal Kishore Singh to take charge of his *zamindari*. They settled the *parganas* of Majhawa and Simraon with him, and the rest of the district was given to his cousins, Kishun Singh and Awadhut Singh. Both became the founders of the Shivhar Raj in Muzaffarpur district and the Madhuvan Raj in the Champaran district later on. The *parganas* of Majhawa and Simraon were settled with Vir Keshwar Singh, the son of Jugal Kishor Singh, at the Decennial Settlement in 1791.[27]

We also find that the Betia Raj had been continuously on the warpath with the neighbouring Gurkha chiefs of Makwanpur in Nepal during 1743–67 over claims of boundaries.[28] When the British East India Company took over control of these regions, they also faced the same problem of boundary conflicts. Therefore, it became inevitable for the Company to wage a battle. Ultimately, in 1814, the British fought a war against the Gurkhas in which the Vir Keshwar Singh played a prominent role.[29]

In 1816, Vir Keshwar Singh was succeeded by his son, Anand Keshwar. Lord William Bentinck conferred the title of the 'Maharaja Bahadur' on him as a reward for his services. Maharaja Anand

Keshwar Singh died in 1855 and was succeeded by Rajendra Keshwar Singh. During the mutiny of 1857, Maharaja Rajendra Singh fully supported the British East India Company in the suppression of the rebellion. The British East India Company admired Raja Rajendra Singh for his help and support for the suppression of the rebellion. The title of 'Maharaja Bahadur' was given to Rajendra Singh and his son Harendra Keshwar Singh, was also given the title of 'Maharaja'. He was the last ruler of Betia Raj, was made a Knights Commander of the order of the Indian Empire (KCIE) and died in 1893.[30] Harendra Keshwar Singh had no son but only two queens and the elder one died in 1896. The Court of Wards took control of the Betia chieftaincy in 1897 but the younger queen Janaki Kunwar, held the Raj nominally. Her title to the estate was contested on three occasions. Babu Ramanandan Singh and Babu Girijanandan Singh of Shivhar laid claim to the estate in turn, but their claims were disallowed by the Privy Council in 1902.[31]

The property of the Betia Raj extended to different regions, i.e. Rajpore Sihoria, Betian, Motihari, Peeprah and Turkaulia. Besides these properties, the chieftaincy also possessed landed property in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Patna, Saran, Mirzapur, Allahabad, Basti, Gorakhpur, Faizabad and Varanasi.[32]

NOTES

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, vol. II, p. 69.
2. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, pp. 136–7.
3. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 67.
4. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, *Champaran*, Patna, Superintendent Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, 1907, p. 135.
5. Ram Prakash Sharma, *Mithila ka Itihas* (Hindi work), Darbhanga, Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University, 1971, pp. 303-4. Ram Prakash tries to prove the fact that the Betia chieftaincy had a connection to the Oinwara dynasty. He finds some similarities between the families. Both belonged to the Kashyapa *gotra* and were residents of Naimisaranya. They had similar titles of Dev and later on, Sinh. There were similarities in the names of their capitals. The capital of the Oinwara dynasty was Sugona near Madhubani in Darbhanga, while Sugaon near Betia in Champaran was the capital of the Betia Raj.
6. R.K. Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut (1206–1765)*, Varanasi,

Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1970, pp. 26–7.

7. Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithila*, Darbhanga, Mithila Institute, 1956, pp. 340–2.

8. Sharma, *Mithila ka Itihas*, pp. 303–4.

9. Zahiruddin Mumammad Babur, *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*, tr. A.S. Beveridge, London, Luzac & Co., 1922, p. 521.

10. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, III, pp. 136–7.

11. Ibid.

12. S.H. Askari, 'The Suba of Bihar under Akbar', *BPP*, vol. XLV, no. 128. 1945, p. 7.

13. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal, Tirhut and Champaran*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1976, vol. XIII, p. 252.

14. Ibid.

15. See the chapter on the Darbhanga Raj.

16. This was a petty zamindar who was a friend of Raja Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga.

17. S.N. Singh, *History of Tirhut: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1922, p. 217, fn. 4.

18. Bakshi Mukund Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, Benares, Vidya Vilas Press, 1950, pp. 156–7.

19. Ibid., p. 178. In one of the versions it is said that the Betia *rajas* were Jethariya Brahmans. They secured recognition from Jahangir, the Mughal emperor. On the death of Raja Gaj Singh in 1694, the Betia chieftaincy was partitioned among his three sons: Dalip Singh got Betia another son, Sheohar, and a third son, Madhubani. Ali Vardi Khan's opponent and contemporary was Raja Dhrub Singh (1715–63) the son and successor of Dalip Singh (Askari, 'The Suba of Bihar under Akbar', *BPP*, vol. LXVI, p. 67. Also see Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut (1206–1765)*, pp. 178f.).

20. Askari, 'The Suba of Bihar under Akbar', p. 67.

21. Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz us Salatin, A History of Bengal*, tr. Maulvi Abdus Salam, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1902, p. 296. Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihas*, pp. 204–8.

22. Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnama*, tr. Jadunath Sarkar, *Bengal Past & Present*, vol. LXVI, Calcutta, Calcutta Historical Soceity, 1946–7, pp. 8–9.

23. *Bengal Select Committee Proceedings*, 1760, p. 3.

24.

Ghulam Hussain Khan Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, vol. II, tr. John Brigs, London, The Royal Asiatic Soceity, 1907, p. 437; Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnama*, tr. Jadunath Sarkar, pp. 76f.

25. J. Long, *Selections from the Unpublished Records of Government for the Yea. 1748–67*, Calcutta, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1869, vol. I, p. 410.

26. Harry Verelst, *A view of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the English Government in Bengal: Including a Reply to the Misrepresentations of Mr. Bolts, and other Writers*, Appendix, London, J. Nourse, Brotherton. 1772, p. 27.

27. O'Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers*, Champaran, p. 136.

28. Ibid., pp. 28–33.

29. Ibid., p. 33.

30. Ibid., p. 136.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

CHAPTER 9

The Hathwa Raj

The Kalyanpur chieftaincy, more popularly known as the Hathwa Raj, was one of the important chieftaincies of north Bihar during the Mughal period. The capital city of Kalyanpur, presently a village, was situated 2.5 miles west of Mirganj and 12 miles north of Siwan in the Saran district of north Bihar.[1]

The chieftaincy comprised Sipah and Huespur, the two *mahals* of the *sarkar* of Saran.[2] The chiefs of Kalyanpur were also known as the *rajas* of Huespur because the headquarters of this chieftaincy was shifted to Huespur in the first half of the seventeenth century. According to *Bengal District Gazetteers, Saran*, the Hathwa Raj comprised some parts of the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Shahabad and Patna in Bihar, and Darjeeling, the district of Bengal and the district of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.[3] The Raj was spread over an area of 561 sq. miles.[4] The rulers of the Hathwa Raj were regarded as one of the oldest aristocratic families in Bihar.[5]

During the ancient period, this region was known as Kosala and inhabited by the Cheros, an aboriginal race.[6] Later on, the Cheros were expelled by the Kshatriyas (Rajputs) who, in turn, were supplanted by the Bhumihar Brahmins and their leader, Raja Birsen, who in due course of time, laid the foundations of the Hathwa Raj.[7] We do not know the exact date of the establishment of the Hathwa Raj but it appears that the chieftaincy was established during the early medieval period.

It is generally believed that the ruling family of the Hathwa Raj was related to the Majhauli Raj of Gorakhpur.[8] However, due to the paucity of source material, it has not been possible to reconstruct a proper history of the Hathwa Raj. It is alleged that the *farmans, nishans, sanads* and *parwanas* were destroyed when these documents were taken away by Raja Fateh Sahi, the chief of the Hathwa Raj, when he rebelled against the British East India Company in 1767.[9]

We find a reference to Raja Jay Mal of Hathwa in 1539 when Emperor Humayun, after his defeat in the battle of Chausa, came to

Bihia near the chieftaincy of Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj). Raja Jay Mal helped Humayun by providing food and fodder for his troops. After some time, when Sher Shah fully established his rule in north India, he took stern action against Raja Jay Mal. The *raja fled* to the forests of Gorakhpur and remained there as a rebel for a long time. However, when Humayun re-established the Mughal empire in India, he gave four *parganas* to Raja Jubraj Shahi, the grandson of Jay Mal.[10]

Thereafter, we get references to conflict between Jubraj Shahi and Kabul Mohammad of Barharia, an Afghan chief who was one of the supporters of Daud Khan, an Afghan rebel. In one of the battles, Jubraj Shahi killed Kabul Mohammad, destroyed his fort and captured the *pargana* of Sipah.[11] According to G.N. Dutt, Maharaja Jubraj Shahi wrested the *pargana* Sipah from Kabul Mohammad of Barharia who was killed in the fight. It is said that the former was defeated several times by Raja Kabul Mohammad who began to extend his estate by encroaching on Husainpur. Kabul Mohammad had made a haughty proposal to the *raja* to give up two villages, Turkaha and Bhurkaha, and to retain two others, Selari and Bhelari, and demanded that if the *raja* was not agreeable to the settlement, he would claim all four.[12] However, Raja Jubraj Shahi defeated Kabul Mohammad in battle. In appreciation of the service rendered by him, Emperor Akbar confirmed the *parganas* assigned to him by Humayun. Thereafter, we have no information on Jubraj in contemporary or later accounts.

The next reference to the Hathwa Raj and its chief, Kalyan Mal, occurs in our sources during the revolt of 1580–3 in the eastern provinces. Abul Fazl writes that Masum Khan Farankhudi, an Afghan noble who held the charge of Ghazipur, rebelled in 1580. Shahbaz Khan immediately marched against him and in a sharp engagement, he was defeated. However, he escaped from the battlefield and fled to Bahraich. From there, he proceeded towards Kalyanpur and appealed to the *raja* to give him shelter. The *raja*, although he had not yet accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals, refused to give him any sort of help. Therefore, Masum Khan Farankhudi went back to Ghazipur and with the help of certain Mughal nobles, such as Saham Khan Jalair of Narhan in Saran and Pahar Khan, submitted before Mirza Aziz Koka, the governor of Bihar. He was forgiven and granted Mehsi in Champaran as a *jagir*.[13]

We find another reference to Raja Kalyan Mal when Noor Mohammad, son of Tar Khan Diwana, and Khawaja Abdul Ghafoor rebelled against the imperial authorities during 1582–3. They tried to plunder a caravan of salt merchants that was passing through the Saran district. The merchants put up a strong fight against them. At the same time, the rebels came to know of the approach of Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka who was marching from Jaunpur. Therefore,

they retreated and took refuge at a place near Tirhut. When Khan-i-Azam arrived there with his contingents, he found the rebels on the other side of the Ganga. He began to construct a bridge across the river. As the bridge neared completion, the rebels lost courage and fled. They went to Kalyanpur to take shelter but Raja Kalyan Mal refused to help them.[14] Hotly chased by the Mughal army, Abdul Ghafoor and his men marched towards Bhati, the principality of Isa Khan in Bengal, but on the way, they were caught and slaughtered by the Khasi Gossiyah tribes in the Santhal Parganas. Noor Mohammad who was marching to Gaya was arrested near Champaran and executed by the followers of Khan-i-Azam.[15]

Although, as referred to above, Raja Kalyan Mal had helped the Mughal army against the rebels on two occasions, surprisingly, neither did Khan-i-Azam, the Mughal commander, recommend him for a reward nor did he himself come to offer his submission. However, the local sources mention that Emperor Akbar was greatly pleased with Kalyan Mal and as a mark of his favour gave him the title of 'Raja'.[16]

After this, for the entire period of Jahangir's reign, we do not get any information about the Hathwa chief in any of the contemporary Persian accounts. However, according to local sources, Raja Khemkaran is said to have established very cordial relations with the emperor and also helped the imperial government to consolidate its rule in Bihar. The emperor, in appreciation of his services, favoured him with the titles of 'Raja Bahadur' and 'Sabi' in 1625.[17]

It appears that Raja Khemkaran had five sons and a brother, and due to his loyalty to the Mughals, achieved a high position. He shifted his capital from Kalyanpur to Husainpur, about 3 miles from Kalyanpur, and built an extensive fort on a very imposing site and commanding position in the junction of two rivers, Jharai and Shiahi, the latter now entirely silted up. It is said that Husainpur remained the seat of the Hathwa *rajas* till it was destroyed during the reign of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal.[18]

We get a reference to the *raja* of Kalyanpur in the account of Peter Mundy in the year 1632–3. He writes that the *raja* of Kalyanpur was well-received by the Mughal provincial authority at Patna and was granted a robe of honour but soon after, was thrown into prison and his properties plundered. His wife and supporters rebelled against the Mughals, and created chaos and confusion for Baba Beg, an imperial revenue officer. Khwaja Anwar was dispatched to help Baba Beg.[19] Mundy fails to provide any other details of this event. Besides these brief references, we have no other information about the Kalyanpur chieftaincy during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

By an examination of the genealogical tree of the Hathwa Raj family, it appears that two *rajas*, the ninety-sixth and the ninety-

seventh, who succeeded Raja Jubraj Shahi Bahadur, only had an ephemeral existence. Raja Chait Shahi Bahadur, the eldest son of Jubraj Shahi, died without any issue and the Raj reverted, in accordance with time honoured traditions, to the eldest male member of the family, Raja Kurtal Shahi Bahadur, a brother of Jubraj Shahi and the fourth son of Raja Balbhadra Shahi Bahadur. So allowing for a lapse of fifty years from Jubraj Shahi to Fateh Shahi, the former seems to have lived in around 1719, a period of anarchy and unrest in India.[20] The immediate predecessor of Fateh Shahi was Raja Sirdar Shahi who lived until 1747. It appears that he invaded the principality of Majhowli in Gorakhpur, defeated it and demolished its fortress [21] It is said that one of the conditions by which Sirdar Shahi had made peace with the Majhowli *raja* was that the latter was not to use flags and the drum insignia of rulership, until he had retaken these by force from Husainpur (the Hathwa *rajas*). These flags and drums of Majhowli were in possession of the Tumcohi *rajas*, the older branch of the Hathwa Raj family residing in the Gorakhpur district. It seems that this development might have taken place during the decline of the Mughal empire and the increasing power of the East India Company. Nadir Shah invaded India in 1739 and ravaged Delhi and around. The Marathas became the masters of the Deccan and later on, their power and position extended to north India, too. Under the leadership of Raghuji Bhonsle, they created great havoc in Bihar and Bengal. Malwa and Gujarat had been separated from the Mughal empire and the Sikhs had carved out their own niche in Panjab. The Rohillas were virtually independent. In this way, the Mughal empire was only in name, and its power and position had declined.

Since the period of Raja Fateh Shahi Bahadur, we find authentic detail and information on the Hathwa Raj. In 1767, Fateh Shahi Bahadur rebelled against the British East India Company. This was the period when the British government had not yet established its hold over Hindustan and the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam II, tried to settle the affairs of the *suba* of Bihar but had failed. He was incited by *zamindars* like Balvant Singh of Varanasi, a relation and friend of Fateh Shahi's family, and others. Mir Qasim, the nawab of Bengal, also tried to uproot the British East India Company but he failed. The British East India Company obtained the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The administration of the affairs of Bihar was vested in a joint council of Europeans and Indians. When, at the end of 1767, the Revenue Collector of the *sarkar* of Saran demanded rents on behalf of the Company Fateh Shahi not only refused to pay the revenue but fought the Company's forces that were sent against him.[22] However, with great difficulty, the British forces defeated and expelled him from Husainpur. After this, the revenue of Husainpur was farmed out to one

Govind Ram. Fateh Shahi retired into the forest bordering the territories of the Awadh state. He looked for every opportunity to raid the district, plunder the villages and stop the collection of revenue by the British. It became a challenge for the British government to maintain peace and order in the region. In 1772, Fateh Shahi, on his one of the regular raids, killed Govind Ram, the government revenue farmer and the collection of the revenue in this region came to a standstill with this death. The Collector of Saran reported that the revenue could not be collected properly in the region as long as Fateh Shahi remained a rebel. He recommended to the Company that Fateh Shahi be taken into confidence and granted some allowances. Fateh Shahi was invited to Patna and an allowance was fixed for his maintenance. In return, he had to live quietly with his family at Husainpur, which was then under the charge of Mir Jamal, the Superintendent of Government Revenue. The Hathwa Raj chieftaincy was kept under direct management for a year and then was assigned to Babu Basant Shahi, a cousin of Fateh Shahi, on the security of the unfortunate Raja Chait Singh of Varanasi. Fateh Shahi, though, could not remain quiet for long. He became very unhappy with the British government and again rebelled against them. Constant complaints of the various depredations committed by him now began to be received by the Central Board of Patna from officers entrusted with the collections. In May 1775, the Provincial Council, which had taken the place of the Central Board, received information that Fateh Shahi had killed Babu Basant Shahi and Mir Jamal in a night attack at Jadopur on the banks of the Gandak. It was said that when Fateh Shahi was in the forest of Charkhia on the opposite side of river Khauwa bordering the district of Gorakhpur, he received information that Babu Basant Shahi was collecting rent at Jadopur, about 22 miles from his abode. Fateh Shahi collected his troops of around one thousand horsemen and three hundred matchlock men and marched the entire night. He reached Jadopur early on the morning of the next day and surrounded it. In the tussle, Fateh Shahi defeated Babu Basant Shahi and murdered him.[23]

The news of the murder of Babu Basant Shahi and Mir Jumla was reported to the Company authority who sent two companies of sepoys under Lt. Erskine. They immediately set out in pursuit but Fateh Shahi moved very fast and fled to the Jogini forest with his booty before any information of his movements was received by them. Fateh Shahi had collected a trained body of cavalry and matchlock men, and some *fakirs* and bandits had also joined his party. The entire region was under his control. Erskine sent his views to the provincial council at Patna and told them unless a body of strong troops was mobilized against Raja Fateh Shahi, peace could not be established in the region.

The *raja* had taken shelter in the Jogini jungles and would prove a pest to the inhabitants around. There were so many entrances to the forest that it would take at least a battalion of sepoys to block them up and pursue the rebel with any prospect of success. The provincial council of Patna further reported on and recommended the matter to Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal. Fateh Shahi had captured some portions in the dominions of Nawab Asafuddaula of Awadh and it was difficult to arrest the *raja* without the assistance of the nawab. The Governor-General reported this matter to the nawab and asked for his help in the arrest of Raja Fateh Shahi. But nothing was done against him. Lt. Hardinge who was stationed at Baragaon, 3 miles away from the present Hathwa, was sent in pursuit of the *raja*. He was instructed to cooperate with Syed Mohammad, the *faujdar* of Gorakhpur, for the arrest of Fateh Shahi. Hardinge stayed in the camp of Syed Mohammad for almost seven days, and was expecting his help and assistance for the arrest of the rebel. Hardinge persuaded him to march against the rebel *raja* who was 150 yards away but Syed Mohammad sent a message to Hardinge that this was not the appropriate time. Later, on it was found that Syed Mohammad was engaged in settling revenue matters with the rebel *raja*. Hardinge returned to Baragaon with his troops in disgust. He wrote to the provincial council at Patna that a greater force was required against Raja Fateh Shahi. The Company announced a reward of Rs. 10,000 to any person who would arrest him or help the Company in his arrest.[24]

During this period, the nawab of Awadh was instructed to farm out the portion of the Husainpur *zamindari* in his dominions by a fair and equitable adjustment of rent to the farmers with whom the rest of the *zamindari* situated in the British territory had been settled. Captain Coxe, commanding a battalion at Bagaha, was instructed to keep himself ready to march with his troops to Gorakhpur and to use his utmost endeavours in conjunction with the nawab's force. Both parties had to apprehend Fateh Shahi and put the farmer in possession of the Husainpur *zamindari*.[25]

However, it appears that nothing could be done against the rebel *raja* as the English East India Company soon faced the rebellion of Raja Chait Singh of Varanasi (16 August 1781) who disturbed regions from Allahabad to Munger. In Bihar, the rebels harassed the English troops regularly. Ross, the revenue chief at the head of the Executive Administration of Patna, wrote to the Council at Calcutta on 20 August 1781 that due to the rebellion of Raja Chait Singh, all communication by post had been cut off from Munger to Varanasi and he could not receive any information from that region. On 29 August, Grome, the Collector of Saran, informed Ross that Riza Quli Khan, the *amil* of Sasaram, had joined Raja Chait Singh and so had many of the

inhabitants of the district, particularly the Ujjainia chiefs. Bunyad Singh who belonged to Chaitpore had converted to Islam and was moving along with 150 horses and 500 armed sepoys to Ramnagar to join Riza Quli Khan. Ross wrote a letter to Major Hardy, the commanding officer of the Patna Militia, on 6 October 1781. The letter shows that Fateh Shahi was still giving trouble to the British government at Saran. Some other *zamindars* had also rebelled against the Company. Ross sent private messengers secretly to many British officials at different places, i.e. Middleton at Lukhnow, Colonel Hannay in Gorakhpur Colonel James Morgan who was commanding the brigade at Kanpur, and Captain William in the Banga and Saran districts, to apprise them of these events. A letter was also dispatched from Captain Nokes, who was commander of one of the regiments at Buxar, to Captain Haukesly Hall at Dinapor, which stated that the country between the river Karmanasa and Varanasi was lined with troops against whom it was not wise to proceed with a small number. There are also references to many sepoys and British officials being killed by the rebels in different places.[26]

At Aurangabad, Raja Narain Singh of Siris and Cotumba had collected a large body of matchlock men and joined Chait Singh's *faujdar*, Bechu Singh, at Marahab with a force of 15,000. He tried to resist the movement of Major James Crawford's regiment that was going to intercept Chait Singh's troops at Ramnagar. When Crawford came to know about this plan of Raja Narain Singh, he changed the route of his expedition and reached Bijugarh. In a battle, Raja Narain Singh was defeated, arrested, persecuted for rebellion and implicated in the case of the murder of one Bhairo Singh, a *zamindar*, who was subordinate to him. He was sent to Dacca as a state prisoney.[27]

Raja Akbar Ali Khan of Nurhat and Samoy had been arrested at Patna for owing heavy arrears. On the breaking-out of Chait Singh's rebellion, he made his escape, raised a troop of 5,000 matchlock men and rebelled against the British government. On 13 October 1781, Ensign Downes was sent to suppress the rebellion. But his troops were not enough to fight the rebels. The *raja* had taken up a strong position in the Gumeah pass to resist the advance of troops. Accordingly, two companies of soldiers under Captain Powell were dispatched from Dinapore. After a hard struggle on 22 October, they occupied a hill that commanded the enemy's position. The rebel was driven out of the pass and chased into the Kharagpur hills. Afterwards, the rebellion of Akbar Ali was condoned.[28]

During the rebellion of Chait Singh, it appears that Raja Fateh Shahi got some respite but the British authority was making plans to defeat and arrest him. In 1781, when the Governor-General was at Varanasi to punish Chait Singh, he had ordered the different divisions of the

army, including the battalion stationed at Baragaon in the *pargana* of Kalyanpur Kowadi to join him. Raja Fateh Shahi came with Ajit Mal and other *zamindars* from Gorakhpur with a body of 20,000 men to Baragaon, and attacked and plundered the station. Grome, the Collector of the district, wrote a *parwana* to Dhujju Singh of Bhurthoohi, a Rajput feudal lord of great influence under the Husainpur Raj, on receipt of this intelligence desiring him to join the *tahsildar* and asking his assistance in driving Fateh Shahi beyond the boundary of the Company's provinces. Dhujju Singh immediately summoned his adherents, amounting to around one thousand men. There was a hotly contested battle between Raja Fateh Shahi and Raja Dhujju Singh in which the former was defeated and retreated to the forest. Fateh Shahi suffered the loss of a large number of his men. Dhujju Singh and his sons were also severely wounded. At the same time, Major Lucas came to his assistance with a reinforcement of regular troops and joined his forces with Dhujju Singh's. Dhujju Singh played a very important role in inflicting a defeat on Fateh Shahi. For this, the Governor-General bestowed a *khilat* of gold cloth on him with many other distinguished marks of his favour and promised that he would confer other honorary rewards on him later on. He further ordered the *diwan*, Kanto Babu, to furnish whatever Dhujju Singh might require for his expenses. When the Governor-General reached Calcutta, he issued orders to Grome to pay a pension of Rs. 200 per month for the maintenance of Dhujju Singh, and the widows and orphans of those killed or wounded in the fight.[29]

Thus, the rebellion of Chait Singh was suppressed and peace and order was restored to the region by the end of 1785. Fateh Shahi was still a rebel, but the British government and local authorities were afraid to put anyone else on the throne of the Hathwa Raj. The wife of Raja Basant Shahi had performed *sati* on the pyre of her husband and had given her only minor son into the care of Dhujju Singh. He served as the guardian of the minor with great efficiency. He wanted to fulfil the interests of his ward and, therefore, remained loyal to the British. With his loyalty and services to the British government, he earned its praise as well as the command of a band of troops. With these men and Mahesh Dutt Shahi by his side, he worked hard with Captain Coxe in clearing the forest in pursuit of Fateh Shahi, and earned the goodwill of the local authorities for himself and his ward. The Revenue Council, in their letter to the Governor-General in Council dated 17 April 1778, recommended that 'Fateh Shahi should be declared to have forfeited his *zamindari* and that it should be bestowed on the young Mahesh Dutt Shahi. And some villages should be added to the *taluka* of Dhujju Singh who should be declared the *diwan*.' The Governor-General in Council replied, 'We have attentively

considered your recommendations of Mahesh Dutt and Dhujju Singh but do not think it proper at this time to comply with them. You may inform them that when with their assistance we apprehend Fateh Shahi, we shall pay proper attention to their pretentions and services.'[30]

In 1785, Fateh Shahi left a rebel's life and settled down peacefully in the portion of his *zamindrri* that was situated in the district of Gorakhpur in the dominions of the nawab of Awadh. In 1808, he became a *fakir* after leading the life of a rebel for almost eighteen years and a retired life for twenty-four. His sons continuously tried to regain the goodwill of the British authorities in order to recover their lost *zamindari*. In 1790, the youngest son of Fateh Shahi petitioned before Montgomerie, the Settlement Officer of Saran, that he be allowed to settle for the revenue of the Husainpur Raj but the claim was treated as inadmissible. Similar applications were also made in 1816 and 1821 with the same result. In June 1829, the great-grandson of Fateh Shahi pursued a regular suit for the recovery of the Raj, but it was dismissed. A similar claim was again set up in 1848 with the same result.[31]

When the British government was thinking of conferring the *zamindari* of Husainpur on Babu Mahesh Dutt Shahi, he died in 1785.[32] After his death, his minor son, Chattradhari Shahi, was conferred with it on 21 January 1791 by Lord Cornwallis on the recommendation of the local authorities. Chattradhari Shahi was only five years old, therefore the estate passed under the protection of the Court of Wards and Dhujju Singh was made guardian. In 1802, Chattradhari Shahi was able to take possession of his *zamindari*. He now shifted his capital from Bhurthuhee to Hathwa where he built his palace and fort surrounded by moats. He gave the village of Hathwa Boojrook to Dhujju Singh as a *jagir*. The title of 'Maharaja Bahadur' and a *khilat* were conferred on him by Lord Auckland in 1837. In return, he paid a *peshkash* of Rs. 50,000 to the Company, which was placed at the disposal of the General Committee of Public Instruction to be disposed of in the interests of education.[33]

Chattradhari Shahi rendered valuable assistance to the British government during the Santhal rebellion by placing his resources at its disposal and promptly executing the orders of the district authorities. He also helped the British government in the suppression of the rebellion of 1857. When the mutiny broke out in the districts of Shahabad and Gorakhpur in June 1857, he was seventy years old but engaged himself in protecting all the *ghats* and private houses of the government officials, and also fought against the rebels. Then there was a disturbance in the Saran district. When the rebels appeared at Subhahanpur near Siwan, the *maharaja* assisted the sub-divisional

officer, Lynch, with his troops, fought against the rebels and gained a victory.

A Brahman of Bhore, Bhujhawan Misir, now became very powerful with the support of the local Rajput population. He began to claim the entire region on the other side of the Jherai River. The *maharaja's* troops that were sent against him to dispossess him were either defeated or pushed back. Bhujhawan Misir had created terror in the region. At last the *maharaja* sought help from the British government, and Bhujhawan was defeated and killed in battle.[34]

There were constant fighting between the Hathwa Raj and Betia Raj over the demarcation of boundaries between the two chief-taincies and thousands of people died in this dispute.[35]

Maharaja Chattradhari Shahi was a great patron of Sanskrit learning. He gave patronage to learned people from Mithila, Varanasi and other places. He opened a Sanskrit school, which was administered and supervised by Rain Narayan Swami, a Sanskrit scholar saint of this period. Around 1,000 students studied there and were fed by the Raj.[36] Maharaja Chattaradhari Shahi was also an able administrator and enlarged his chieftaincy. The villages on the borders of the Gandak and Ghaghra rivers were taken by him into his possession when the Babus of Pursa became weak. He eventually died on 16 March 1858.[37]

Two sons of Maharaja Chattradhari Shahi had died during his lifetime. It was the turn of the third son, Maharaja Kumar Ugra Pratap Shah, to succeed him. However, he had a son Rajendra Pratap Shahi, who was liked by his grandfather, Chattradhari Shahi and had shown his desire to succeed him after his death. Therefore, Rajendra Pratap, the son of Ugra Pratap, succeeded to the throne of the Hathwa Raj in 1858. He obtained a *jagir* in the Shahabad district from the confiscated estates of the rebel Kunwar Singh of the Ujjainia chieftaincy, yielding an annual rent of Rs. 20,000. His grandfather had paid great service to the British in the suppression of the rebellion during the revolt of 1857 and Maharaja Rajendra Pratap followed in his footsteps.[38] It appears, though, that Rajendra Pratap had extravagant tastes as he went hunting in the terrain forests and stayed there for almost six months. His camp equipage consisted of six elephants, several *zamindars*, many dancing girls and even his own markets to supply ration *(rasads)* to his retinue and camp followers, along with an equal number of advancing tents for the next stage.[39]

Maharaja Rajendra Pratap Shahi died in 1871 leaving behind a minor son of fifteen, Maharaja Krishna Pratap Shahi Bahadur. For a few years, the Court of Wards took possession of the administration of the Hathwa Raj. When he reached adulthood in 1874, he was installed on the throne as Maharaja Bahadur in August at Chapra at a grand

durbar by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Richard Temple. The *maharaja* also received a medal of distinction struck in commemoration of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India in 1874–5 and another in 1877 at the Imperial Assemblage in Delhi on the proclamation of Her Most Gracious Majesty, the late Queen Victoria, as the Empress of India. In 1889, he was created, unsolicited, a Knight Commander of the Exalted Order of the Indian empire.[40] In 1894, a riot broke out in Basantpur and the *maharaja* immediately provided all kinds of support to the British officials to control the situation and establish peace in the area.

He was otherwise, a great patron of Sanskrit learning and was a great Sanskrit scholar. He also gave patronage to learned people. Rare and important works in Sanskrit were edited and translated during his period. Among these is a monumental work on Vedic rituals, *Paraskara Grihyasutra*, with several commentaries. In its preface, the *maharaja* has given a brief history of his family in Sanskrit. He was himself the author of a book of songs, *Soka- Mudgara*, composed on the death of his first son. He maintained a library during his lifetime, which contained numerous rare and valuable manuscripts that were examined by the Asiatic Society of Bengal later on and eulogized by its President, Sir Charles Elliot, in his Annual Address. Although the *maharaja* was offered a seat in the Government Legislative Councils many times, he refused as he was more interested in an ascetic life. He also performed a number of pilgrimages. Later on, he passed the greater part of his life in the company of scholars and saints at Varanasi, where he built palatial buildings and temples. Ranjit Singh of Punjab had plated the dome of the Vishvanath Temple at Varanasi with gold and the *maharaja* plated the reservoir of the image within with thick silver, which cost nearly Rs. 1 lakh. He also showed true religious spirit by willing a portion of his Raj into perpetuity, yielding an income of Rs. 20,000 for the maintenance of the beautiful temple of Gopalji constructed by his late mother. In addition he revived the Sanskrit school of Chattradhari Shahi, which had dwindled away in his predecessor's period.[41]

The *maharaja* was equally charitable in works of public utility. He constructed numerous large tanks built masonry *ghats* with slopes on them for the cattle to drink water. He constructed many new roads and thousands of wells and embankments for his tenants and set apart extensive mango gardens for the public to enjoy their fruit. Each winter, he distributed thousands of blankets to old and needy people who were unable to work. He ordered that old horses and cattle not be engaged in work but be fed as long as they survived. The *maharaja* was a man of justice and honesty. It was his strict order to pay salaries to all his servants on the very first day of each month and he did not

like to hear that he owed any debt to anybody. He gave patronage to both primary and higher education. He established a free-entrance school in the Raj with a scholarship for successful students to pursue higher standards and opened numerous primary schools for imparting free education to his tenants. The *maharaja* appreciated the meritorious services of his servants and often encouraged them by giving handsome rewards. He was very kind and popular among the people due to his generous nature, a fact that is well-exhibited from his telegram of condolence on the death of his faithful *diwan*, Babu Bhubaneswar Dutt, at his residence at Chandernagore, to his nephew, Babu Devendra Nath Dutt, his present *diwan:* 'My heart bleeds to hear of your uncle's death. The loss is irreparable to the Hathwa Raj. You have got your uncle alive in me. It is I whose uncle is lost.'[42]

In July 1890, the *maharaja* lost his first son. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Stuart Bayley, in his letter of condolence to the *maharaja*, wrote: The loss of the only heir to one of the historical houses of Bihar is what I consider a public calamity.'[43]

In this way, Maharaja Sir Krishna Pratap Shahi's reign was full of prosperity. He created a new palace named after him, Krishna Bhavan, which was well-decorated. The resources of the Raj considerably increased during his period. It is interesting to know that he left behind him Rs. 55 lakh in cash in the two strongholds of his fort. He had also stocked rich jewellery and money in his *howdakhana* and *toshakhana* for the construction of different buildings. He gave away Rs. 6 lakh on the birth of his first son, and spent Rs. 1 lakh on the marriage of the Maharaja Kumar of Varanasi at Salemgarh in the district of Gorakhpur.

The *maharaja* died at the age of forty-one years on 20 October 1896 leaving behind a son of four year and a daughter, nearly one year old. As his son was a minor, the Court of Wards took up the administration of the Raj for the third time and appointed the Dowager Maharani as his guardian. During the same period, there were two disastrous famines in Bihar in which the Raj spent more than Rs. 10 lakh to relieve the distress of its tenants.[44]

The charity of the Maharani of Hathwa was very famous. She contributed Rs. 1 lakh to the Famine Fund raised by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, for the relief of the distressed people in the Central Provinces and Rajputana; another Rs. 1 lakh to the Victoria Memorial Fund; Rs. 50,000 to the Lady Dufferin Zenana Hospital; Rs. 30,000 to the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association Fund; Rs. 25,000 for the Chapra Charitable Hospital and other numerous minor contributions. In recognition of her charity and kind-heartedness towards the tenants in her Raj, the British government conferred on her the *Kaisar-i-Hind* gold medal at a grand durbar, Hathwa in January 1902.[45]

During the end of the nineteenth century, the Hathwa chief-taincy covered its *zamindari* in different districts of the Bihar *suba.* It had 1,350 villages in Saran, twenty-four villages in Champaran, eleven villages in Muzaffarpure and fifteen villages in the Shahabad district.[46]

SOME OTHER CHIEFTAINCIES

In the earlier chapters, we discussed the major chieftaincies of the Bihar *suba* in detail. In the course of our study, we came across references to several other chieftaincies, such as at Panchet, Seor, Garhi, Ratanpur, Ramnagar, Bhagwanpur, Chai, during the Mughal period.

However, the information available on the areas held by the chiefs and the details of their families is very little and it becomes extremely difficult for us to form any opinion about the nature of these chieftaincies. On the basis of the information available to us, though, we provide below an account of some of them.

The Panchet Chieftaincy. This is not mentioned during the reign of Akbar but is recorded in the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* as an important chieftaincy, which lay close to the territory of Shams Khan, the *zamindar* of Birbhum in the time of Jahangir.[47] We do not find a clear geographical description of the Panchet chieftaincy in contemporary or near-contemporary Mughal chronicles but it appears that it was in the *suba* of Bihar and adjacent to the *suba* of Bengal.[48] Heinrich Blochmann places it outside the western frontier of the Akbari *suba* of Bengal.[49] Ahsan Raza Khan puts the Panchet chief-taincy as near the south of Garhi, which is mentioned in the *Ain-i Akbari*, as the boundary of the *subas* of Bihar and Bengal. The two *subas* did not have a common boundary. The intervening territory seems to have comprised a number of chieftaincies and Panchet was one of them.[50]

Therefore, it seems that the Panchet chieftaincy was situated in a secluded area and could not be subdued during the time of Akbar. During the period of Jahangir, Qasim Khan, the governor of Bengal, sent an expedition under the command of Shaikh Kamal against Bir Hamir, the *zamindar* of Panchet and Shams Khan, the *zamindar* of Birbhum. It appears that Bir Hamir submitted to the Mughals without creating any disturbance against them.[51] He also agreed to help Shaikh Kamal against Shams Khan. Shams Khan resisted the Mughal forces for some time but was defeated at last and submitted to them. He apologized sincerely for his misconduct and was forgiven.[52]

We get a reference of Raja Bir Narain, another chief of Panchet, who was given a *mansab* of 700 *zat* and 300 *sawar* during the reign of Shah Jahan.[53] Blochmann informs us that he paid a fixed *peshkash* to

the Mughals[54] but the details are not available. Bir Narain died in 1632.[55] Thereafter, we get no other reference to the Panchet chieftaincy in our period. During 1741 when the Marathas under the command of Bhaskar Rain were attacking Bengal, they marched through Ramgarh and plundered the district of Panchet,[56] which lay 60 miles east of Ranchi. We do not find a reference to the chief of Panchet or any other of his activities.

The Seor Chieftaincy. This was another chieftaincy that lay in the middle of the *sarkar* of Bihar. In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Seor is mentioned as a *mahal* of the *sarkar* of Bihar with a strong fort on a high hill.[57] Abul Fazl writes in the *Akbarnama* that the chieftain of Seor submitted in 1577–8 without offering any resistance to Muzaffar Khan Turbati who had encamped there after suppressing the rebellions of the Afghans of south Bihar. The chief also presented a *peshkash* of Rs. 30,000 and twenty elephants.[58] We find no other reference to this chieftaincy in the sources of our period.

The Garhi Chieftaincy. This was another chieftaincy of Bihar that lay on the border of the *suba* of Bihar and Bengal. This chieftaincy was conferred on Rain Bhim by Raja Man Singh during 1600–1 when the former gave the valuable service to the Mughals in their Bengal expedition.[59] Udho Singh was the third chief of Garhi. He was forced to present himself before Shah Jahan in 1642 and converted to Islam.[60] The chieftaincy of Garhi was reconferred and the title of 'Raja granted to him by Shah Jahan.[61] We do not find any other account of this chieftaincy in the sources of our study. *The Ratanpur Chieftaincy:* This was another important chieftaincy of north Bihar. In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Ratanpur is mentioned as a *mahal* of the *sarkar* of Rohtas with a strong fort.[62] Abdullah Khan Feroz Jang, the governor of Bihar, invaded Ratanpur in 1636–7 and compelled the chieftain, Babu Laxman, to fight bravely against the Mughal army for some time. But he was defeated and forced to accept the subordination of the Mughals. He paid a huge amount of money and elephants as *peshkash* to the *subedar* of Bihar.[63] Thereafter, we have no record of this chieftaincy.

The Chieftains of Ramnagar: These chieftaincies traced their origin from Ratan Singh of Chittor. They established their chieftaincy in Ramnagar, 30 miles to the north-west of Betia in Champaran. One of the chiefs of Ramnagar was given the title of 'Raja' by Aurangzeb in 1676.[64]

The Chieftaincy of Bhagwanpur: Bhagwanpur is a village in the Muzaffarpur district of the Bihar *suba.* The chieftaincy was founded by

Raja Laxmi Mal. He was a Rajput who came to Bihar from Sakti near Delhi, and took Chayanpur and Chausa under his possession.[65] We do not find any detailed accounts of this principality.

The Deoraj Family: This family belonged to Gaya and seems to be one of the oldest families of Bihar. It traced its origin from the family of the Sisodia Rajputs. This chieftaincy was founded during the Mughal period.[66] We have no other information on it. *The Kahalgaon (Colgong) Chieftaincy*. This was a *mahal in* the *sarkar* of Munger[67] and was a prominent chieftaincy during sixteenth century.[68]

The Chai Chieftaincy: This was another principality which lay in the *pargana* of Chai in Munger. It was also founded during the sixteenth century. The Chai chieftaincy appears to have been a branch of the chieftaincy of Kharagpur.[69] Its capital was at Alamnagar in Bhagalpur.[70]

The Chieftaincy of Ramgarh: This lay in the district of Hazaribagh. According to the *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Hazaribagh*, Tej Singh was the *raja* who built his residence at Ichak, a village situated 7 to 8 miles north of Hazaribagh, after the capture of Ramgarh by the British in 1772. His successors built a fort of bricks, three storeys high. Later on, though, this building was not used as a residence by the *rajas* and soon fell into ruin?[71]

NOTES

1. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Saran*, Calcutta, The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1908, vol. XII, p. 153.
2. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. SaiyidAhmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, vol. II, p. 69.
3. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Saran*, pp. 153–4.
4. Ibid., p. 144.
5. Ibid.
6. G.N. Dutt, 'History of the Hutwa Raj', *JASB*, 1904, vol. 73, p. 179.
7. Ibid.
8. Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj, Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District 1793–1920*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 58–9. The Majhauli tradition associates Mayyur with three wives and a Kurmi concubine.

From each, he had sons who established their chieftaincy from their inheritance. The first marriage to a Brahman initiated the line of the Misra Brahmans; from his second wife, a Surajbhans Rajput, came the founder of the Majhauli Raj; and the son of his Bhumihar Brahman wife received a portion of his estate that later constituted the Hathwa and Tamkuhi chieftaincy. Mayyur's Kurmi concubine produced an heir who established the Kokradih estates (seep. 59).

9. Dutt, 'History of the Hutwa Raj', p. 179.

10. Shaad Azimabadi, *Tarikh-i-Suba Bihar*, Patna, Fine Art Printing Works, 1924, vol. I, pp. 121–2.

11. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Saran*, p. 21.

12. One bard mentions in Hindi *'turkaha bhurkaha mor, selari bhelari tor, mano to mano, nahi wah-bhi hai mor'(meaning:* Turkaha and Bhurkaha regions are mine, Selari and Bhelari regions are yours, if you arrept this proposal, it is fine, otherwise, those regions are also mine). After his last defeat, Raja Jubraj was fleeing through the forests with a handful of followers when the Goddess Bhavani appeared to him in a dream and complained that she was miserable under Kabul Mohammad's rule. She encouraged the *raja* to fight against him with his handful of men and promised to aid him. 'The moment you commence your expedition,' she said, 'you will see a jackal on the left and a serpent on the right. Bow down to the former and kill the latter.' The *raja* did so and gained a complete victory over his enemy at the decisive battle of Ramchandrapore, a mile east of Thawe. An image of Durga was found in the forest of Thawe, in an old fortress, in accordance with his dream, under a single and peculiar tree that still exists within the temple compound. It is reported that one of the feet of the goddess had sunk to a fathomless depth and the other was resting on the figure of a lion. The *rajas* of Hathwa had constructed a splendid temple for her and built a palace for to reside there while worshipping her. Food (Bali) for jackals is still offered in the forest. A big fair is held there in the month of *Chait* (Dutt, 'History of the Hutwa Raj', pp. 183–4).

13. Ibid.

14. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Calcutta, ASB, 1877, vol. III, pp. 396–7.

15. Ibid.

16. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Saran*, p. 144.

17. Dutt, 'History of the Hutwa Raj', p. 182.

18. Ibid. It is said that Raja Fateh Shahi rebelled during the period of Warren Hastings. Action was taken against him and the fort was destroyed. However, the *raja* had created another fort whose ruins are called Naya Killa. After the fall of Husainpur, the family split into two the older branch in the direct line of Fateh Shahi established themselves at Tancohi where they founded the Tancohi Raj in Gorakhpur, and the younger branch, descendants of Babu

Basant Shahi, established themselves at Huthwa, and founded the present Hathwa Raj in 1802. The ruins of the fort of Husainpur are still extant and there is a stone image of a goddess called Saiya Devi under a Bar tree on the banks of the Jharai. The *rajas* of Husainpur used to worship her and present offerings before going to battle. Probably Saiya Devi is a phonetic contraction of Sahaya Devi, meaning 'goddess of assistance'. The late Raja Sir Krishna Pratap Shahi Bahadur, KCIE, had built a bungalow on an elevated place in the old fort in front of an ancient archway that still supported a big banyan tree, and had laid a very extensive mango garden of about 100 *bighas* on both sides of the road. He also excavated a big tank with a *ghatin* front of the temple of Shiva constructed by him, re-excavated one within the fort and edified its bank with a masonry *ghat* (see pp. 182–3).

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 184.

21. The Majhowli *maharajas* were of considerable influence during the reign of the Mughal emperors. Theywere called *tiläkdhari rajas*, i.e. empowered to install other *rajas.* It is said that one of the menial servants (a *kahar*by caste and *palki* bearer. *Palki* or palanquin: a small wooden cart carried by men on their shoulders) of a *maharaja* of Majhowli had accidently dozed and fallen on his feet while shampooing the feet of his master and his forehead touched the *maharaja's* toe. 'Thou art a Raja now and I will give you a Raj', exdaimed the *maharaja* and promised that the distance that he would carry him while asleep in *a palki* would be his Raj. The *palki* bearers went around a considerable portion of the *maharaja's* estate, and the latter was only awakened by the cries of his honest men, alarmed to see his doom. The portion thus got by the *palki* bearers now forms the Perdowna estate in Gorakhpur and the Roy Sahebs of Perdowna (the descendants of the recipient of the grant) are bigger *zamindars* in the district than the present *maharaja* himself. They attend on the Majhowli *maharaja* on Dussehra day with *Hathar chilinchi* to exhibit their loyalty. The high position then held by the Majhowli chief must have Maharaja Sirdar Shahi, and to humiliate the former wish (G.N. Dutt, 'History of the Hutwa Raj', pp. 184–5 n.).

22. Ibid., pp. 185–6.

23. There are two versions regarding the murder of Babu Basant Shahi. First, Fateh Shahi asked Babu Basant Shahi to join him against the British but he refused by saying that he had pledged not to be disloyal to the English. Thereupon, Fateh Shahi fought a battle against Babu Basant Shahi in which the latter was killed. The second version is that Fateh Shahi, after overtaking Basant Shahi, was overpowered by a feeling of fraternal affection and was retreating when he was questioned by one of his menial servants, Gopal Bari, and a kinsman follower, as to why he had let off Basant Shahi after getting him within his grasp with so much trouble. To this, Fateh Shahi replied that he had let him off because he was his cousin. In return, he asked a question to them: 'if he was your son-in-law, would you have let him off?' Thus incited, the two men at once rushed upon Basant Shahi and beheaded him. The place where he was beheaded, a garden, is still called Mudkatiya Bag and the peepul tree under which this atrocious act was committed is still worshipped by the family of the *maharaja* of Hathwa, who directly owe their origin to Basant Shahi. Fateh

Shahi then sent the head of the deceased man to his wife at Husainpur, who jumped into the funeral pyre, with her husband's head on her lap followed by thirteen of her maid-servants, and uttering, at the same time, an everlasting curse on any of her progeny who would ever have any connection whatsoever with Fateh Shahi's family a mandate still strictly adhered to by the *maharajas* of Hathwa who, when passing through the Tamcohi (Fateh Shahi's) Raj, do not drink water or take any food belonging to the place. Under the shadowy grove of an ancient banyan tree in the fort of Husainpur, there exist fourteen *stupas* wherein were enshrined the ashes of these fourteen *satin* who are worshipped annually and every time the *maharajas* and *maharanis* of Hathwa visit the place (ibid., p. 187).

24. Ibid., pp. 188–9.

25. Ibid., p. 189.

26. Ibid., pp. 189–90.

27. Ibid., p. 191.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., pp. 191–2.

30. Ibid., pp. 192–3.

31. Ibid., pp. 193–4.

32. It is said that the astrologers having predicted that Babu Mahesh Dutt's lease of life was only for twenty-two years, his guardian, Dhujju Singh, hastened to marry him at an early age to the daughter of the Chainpur Babu in order that he might have an issue to continue his line. He requested the Babu to send the bride to the bridegroom's house within a year of the marriage, which was contrary to his family custom. The bride's father refused to send the bride whereupon Dhujju Singh had Mahesh Dutt married again to a poor girl who gave birth to a child who came to be known as Maharaja Chattradhari Shahi Bahadur. This child was born two months after Babu Mahesh Dutt's demise (ibid., p. 194).

33. Ibid., pp. 194–5.

34. Ibid., p. 196.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., p. 197.

37. Ibid.

38. The two sons of the second son of Maharaja Chattradhari Shahi, Babu Tilakdhari Shahi and Babu Bir Pratap Shahi, asked for a partition of the chieftaincy. Their suit was first tried by the District Court of Saran but Babu Tilakdhari Shahi withdrew his claim later on after a compromise whereby he

got some villages for his maintenance. Babu Bir Pratap Shahi's plea was rejected by the District Court. He then appealed to the High Court of Calcutta and then to the Privy Council. It was decided that Babu Bir Pratap Shahi would get a fixed pension of Rs. 1,000 as a monthly pension for his maintenance (ibid., pp. 197–8).

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 198.

41. Ibid., pp. 198–9.

42. Ibid., pp. 199–200.

43. Ibid., p. 200.

44. Ibid., p. 201.

45. Ibid., p. 202.

46. Ibid., p. 203.

47. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M.I. Borah, Guwahati, Depart-ment of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1936, vol. I, p. 18.

48. Ahmad Raza Khan, 'Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582–1707', unpublished thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 1985, pp. 179–81.

49. Heinrich Blochmann, *Contribution to the Geography and History of BengaL* Calcutta, Asiatic Society, 1968, p. 15.

50. Ahsan Raza Khan, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977, p. 173.

51. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, p. 19.

52. Ibid.

53. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, ed. Kabir al-Din Ahmad, Abdur Rahim and W.N. Lees, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1866–72, vol. I, pt. II, p. 317.

54. Heinrich Blochmann, 'Notes on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau', *JASB*, 1871, p. 118.

55. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, p. 317.

56. Ghulam Hussain Khan Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, tr. Haji Mustafa, Calcutta, T.D. Chatterjee, 1902, vol. I, p. 377.

57. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Private Press, 1856, vol. II, p. 68.

58. Arif Qandhari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, ed. Imtiaz Ali Arshi, Rampur, Rampur Raza

Library, 1962, p. 226.

59. K.K. Basu, The History of Telliagarhi and Madhubani', *IHRC*, vol. 35, pt. II, 1960, pp. 51–5.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, pp. 68–9.

63. Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 84. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul Umara*, ed. Abdur Rahim and Ashraf Ali, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1888–91, vol. II, pp. 785–6.

64. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Champaran*, p. 159. Also see Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. XII, p. 252.

65. Loke Nath Ghose, *The Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, Rajas and Zamindars, & C.*, Calcutta, J.N. Ghose & Co., 1881, vol. II, p. 437.

66. Ibid., p. 426.

67. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, p. 69.

68. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga, vol. XIV, pp. 245–6.

69. Ibid., pp. 242–3.

70. Ibid., pp. 91–2.

71. D.R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, Patna, KPJRI, 1963, p. 171. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengab* vol. XVI, p. 87. E. Lister, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Hazaribagh*, Patna, Superintendent, Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, 1917, p. 201.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion

The present study is mainly based on a detailed biographical account of the chieftaincies (and chieftains) of Kharagpur, the Ujjainias of Bhojpur, the Cheros of Palamau, the Gidhaur, the Khokhra, the Darbhanga Raj, the Hathwa Raj (Kalyanpur), the Betia Raj (Champaran), Panchet and Seor presented over eight chapters. The study shows that most of these chieftaincies were located in the midst of dense forests and hilly tracts, not easily accessible to the Mughal forces. The Ujjainia chieftaincy, for example, was covered on all sides by dense forests. We are told that Raja Gajpati Ujjainia rebelled and took shelter in the fort of Jagdishpur during 1576–7 and that 'The Mughal soldiers took two months in cutting down the trees around the dwelling'.[1] According to Abul Fazl, Madho Singh (Madhukar Rai), the *raja* of Khokhra, frequently rebelled because the 'hilly tracts were difficult to cross'.[2] Jahangir, in his memoirs, too, writes, 'Although the governors of the *suba* frequently sent armies against him (Khokhra) and went there themselves, in consequence of the difficult roads and thickness of the forest they contended themselves with taking two or three diamonds and left him in his former condition.'[3]

The Palamau chieftaincy was also located around dense forests and rugged hills, and a strong fort built atop a hill.[4] According to Lahori, the rulers of Palamau, taking advantage of the dense forest in their chieftaincy, which was almost inaccessible, showed no signs of obedience to the governor of the *suba* of Bihar.[5] Several other chieftaincies, such as Kharagpur, Gidhaur, Hathwa and Betia, were also surrounded by dense forests. Besides, all the chiefs built strong forts, generally on hilltops. Arif Qandhari writes, 'there are nearly two or three hundred *zamindars*. Their suppression was very difficult, as they possess strong forts. If they are able to hold on to each one of the forts, say for six months or one year, they can be contended about their safety for the next two or three hundred years.'[6]

We shall now examine the nature of submission of the chief-taincies to the Mughals or, in other words, the nature of overlordship

established by the Mughals over the chieftains. Most of the important chiefs of Bihar, such as Raja Gajpati Ujjainia; Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur; Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur; Madhukar Rai and Bairisal, the chiefs of Khokhra; Raja Udai Karan of Champaran, accepted the overlordship of the Mughal imperial authority during the years 1568–80 when the campaign against the Afghans was in progress.[7] But it is quite surprising to note that even the *Akbarnama* does not inform us about the terms and conditions under which the chiefs accepted the subordination of the Mughals. For example, Abul Fazl writes that Raja Gajpati, who submitted before Munim Khan in 1569, agreed to pay Rs. 5 lakh of *malguzari* annually. In 1578, the chief of Seor presented a *peshkash* of Rs. 30,000 and twenty elephants. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur and Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur offered to pay a *peshkash* of elephants and other rarities of the area after accepting the overlordship of the Mughals in 1591.[8] There is hardly any reference to any concession offered to them on behalf of the imperial government.

However, we do find that after accepting the overlordship of the Mughal authority, some of these *rajas*, along with their military contingents, helped the imperial armies in suppressing the Afghan rebels. Yet not one of them was given a rank or office in the Mughal administration. We also find a reference to the marriage of Prince Danial, the son of Akbar, with the daughter of Raja Dalpat Ujjainia during the reign of Akbar but even after the marriage, the *raja* was neither given a rank nor any office in the administration.[9] We find another reference to the marriage between the sister of Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Chandrabhan, the brother of Raja Man Singh.[10] But even after this, the *raja* of Gidhaur did not get any special favour from the Mughal administration. It may be pointed out that neither Akbar nor any other Mughal ruler after him entered into a matrimonial alliance with the chiefs of Bihar.

From the above, one may conclude that Akbar was not favourably inclined towards the chiefs of Bihar and thus, neither were the chiefs given any concessions by the administration nor could a close cordial relationship be established. The policy followed by the Mughal administration in Bihar was quite different to the one adopted in relation to the chiefs of Rajasthan where almost every chief who accepted Mughal subordination was given special favours. It seems that the Bihar chiefs were not considered of a status sufficient for the establishment of matrimonial relations or even for the grant of *mansabs*. It seems that politically, too, they were not considered of much importance even in Bihar because many of them did not have a large following of their clan or kinsmen, as they had immigrated from different regions of Hindustan and established their *zamindari* in Bihar after dispossessing either some local chief or an aboriginal tribe. For

example, the Ujjainias of Bhojpur were Parmar Rajputs who migrated from Ujjain and established their hegemony over Bhojpur after expelling the Cheros, a Dravidian tribe of the region.[11] Likewise, the founding fathers of the Khokhra chieftaincy originally belonged to the Kawardha region in Madhya Pradesh but after being overthrown by the Gonds during the fourteenth century, they migrated to the Chhota Nagpur region and carved out an independent kingdom.[12] The family of the Gidhaur chieftaincy belonged to Mahoba in Bundelkhand but a few generations later, Bir Bikram Shah established his chieftaincy at Gidhaur after killing the chief of the Dosadhs, the local inhabitants, in 1262.[13] The entire area of the Kharagpur chieftaincy was originally held by aboriginal tribes called Khetauris and there were around fifty-two tribal chiefs. Some time in the beginning of the sixteenth century, three Rajput brothers, Dandu Rai, Basdeo Rai and Mahender Rai, took service under Raja Sasanka, the Khetauri chief of Kherhi near Munger. In due course of time, the brothers defeated all the fifty-two Khetauri chiefs and established the Kharagpur chieftaincy.[14] They were also not given much importance by Akbar probably because most of them had very small areas under their control. Strategically, too, the areas held by the chiefs were not of importance to the empire.

Besides, their close relations with the Afghans also came in the way because Mughal authorities could not fully rely on them. As a consequence, as soon as the imperial armies withdrew from Bihar after suppressing the Afghans, the *rajas* openly rebelled, one after the other, and refused to pay tribute. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Raja Gajpati Ujjainia and the *raja* of Khokhra rebelled on several occasions during Akbar's reign.

The chieftains, however, improved their position at the Mughal court during the reign of Jahangir. For the first time, some of them were granted *mansabs*. Raja Roz Afzun was assigned the rank of 1,500/700.[15] He remained at the court for some time and became a great favourite of the emperor. He was even sent to enquire why Prince Khurram, son of Jahangir and future Shah Jahan, had defied imperial orders and captured the *jagir* of Dholpur, which had already been assigned to Shahriyar, son of Jahangir.[16] Again, Raja Roz Afzun was sent to summon Prince Parvez, son of Jahangir, to the court to lead a campaign against the rebel Prince Khurram.[17] Raja Roz Afzun was promoted to the rank of 2,000 *zat* and 1,000 *sawar* during Shah Jahan's reign.[18] This was the highest *mansab* given to any chief of Bihar so far. He was asked not only to help the Mughal authority in and around Bihar but was also deputed to serve the imperial army in Kabul, Balkh and the Deccan.[19]

Raja Narayan Mal Ujjainia was also granted a *mansab* of 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* during the reign of Jahangir.[20] His younger brother,

Raja Pratap Ujjainia, held *mansab* of 1,500 *zat* and 1,000 *sawar* in the first year of Shah Jahan's reign.[21] Shah Jahan also granted him a *jagir* in the *sarkar* of Shahabad. Another Ujjainia chief, Raja Rudra Singh, was able to win the confidence of Emperor Aurangzeb and was appointed the *faujdar* of the *sarkar* of Shahabad for some time during 1682.[22] Pratap Chero (1,000/1,000), Raj Bir Narayan of Panchet (700/300) and Amar Singh of Bhojpur (1,000/800) were also given ranks in the time of Shah Jahan. During the reign of Aurangzeb, though, no further promotions were given to any of the chiefs.

During the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan, all four approached several chiefs of Bihar and sought their help. Princes Shah Shuja and Dara Shikoh appealed to Raja Dal Singh of Gidhaur to help them with his armed retainers.[23] Dara Shikoh persuaded Dal Singh to capture Kharagpur as its chief, Raja Bahroz, had declined to help him and preferred to support Prince Shah Shuja.[24] Dara Shikoh also rewarded Koklat Ujjainia (also known as Gokul Chand Ujjainia, a rebel and rival of Amar Singh, the chief of Bhojpur) by promoting him to the rank of 1,000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* for his help in the war against Dara Shikoh.[25] Raja Bahroz of Kharagpur helped Prince Shah Shuja till the battle of Samugarh (29 May 1658). Thereafter, he went over to Aurangzeb and helped him against the latter.[26] Other chiefs also sided with one or the other prince in the war of succession. However, even after the accession of Aurangzeb, the position of the chiefs of Bihar did not improve.

Relations between the chiefs and the Mughal administration were generally not very cordial. During the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, too, several chiefs rebelled and the imperial administration took very strong action after suppressing their rebellions. Raja Pratap Ujjainia rebelled against the Mughals in 1637. He was arrested and executed in Patna, his chieftaincy (Bhojpur) was brought under the *khalsa* (the royal land) and Nemat Khan, the son of Sayid Khan, was deputed to look after the affairs of Bhoj-pur. However, after a lapse of nearly twelve years, Amar Singh, the son of Raja Narayan Mal and nephew of Raja Pratap Ujjainia, with the help of Prince Shah Shuja, was able to get back the chieftaincy.

The case of Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur in this connection is quite unique and merits our attention. In 1606, he rebelled and was killed in the battle fought with the imperial army posted in Bihar. It appears that after his death, his state was brought under the *khalsa* and restored to his son, Toral Mal (named Roz Afzun after conversion) after some time on condition that he embraced Islam. In the reign of Shah Jahan, too, Raja Udho Singh of Garhi was recognized as the legal successor only on condition of his conversion to Islam.[27] We do not have much information on Raja Udho Singh but Raja Roz Afzun and

his successor, Raja Bahroz, enjoyed important positions after their conversion to Islam. Some chiefs, such as those of the Ujjainias of Bhojpur, Kharagpur, Palamau and Panchet, were absorbed into the Mughal administration and given *mansabs*. However, the *rajas* of Gidhaur, Champaran, Kalyan-pur (Hathwa), Khokhra and Seor were not given any *mansab* although they rendered military service to the Mughal authority whenever asked to do so.

The chieftains were required to pay tribute (*peshkash*) as a mark of submission. However, information in this regard is so little that it is difficult to determine the exact amount of *peshkash* paid by the chiefs of Bihar. It is also not clear whether it was paid on a yearly or half-yearly basis. *Peshkash* was generally presented at the time of submission to the Mughals or whenever the emperor, princes or their representatives (high *mansabdars* or commanders) passed through the territories of the chiefs. It was paid either in cash or kind. When it was collected in kind, it consisted of valuable commodities or rarities of the regions. In Bihar, elephants and cash were the main items presented as *peshkash*. The region of Khokhra being rich in diamonds, its *raja* invariably included diamonds in his *peshkash*. For certain chieftaincies, the Mughal administration arbitrarily fixed the *peshkash* at a very high rate and when the chieftains failed to pay the amount, their states were invaded by the imperial armies and forced to do so. If they failed, the chieftaincies were brought under the *khalsa*.[28]

In order to ensure the fidelity of the chiefs, whether *mansabdars* or non-*mansabdars*, they were required to send their sons or kinsmen as hostages to the Mughal court. Hari Singh, the son of Puran Mal of Gidhaur, was kept as a hostage at Delhi to ensure the good conduct of his father.[29] During the war of succession, Shah Shuja had kept Prabal Singh, the brother of the Ujjainia chief, Raja Amar Singh, as a hostage so that Amar Singh would not change his loyalties.[30]

We also find that the Mughal emperors extended help and protection to loyal chiefs in case of civil war in their territories or against any outside aggression. During 1607–8, Emperor Jahangir ordered Rai Kalyan Singh to proceed towards Bhojpur immediately to help Narayan Mal suppress the rebellion of the Cheros in his territory.[31] During 1599–1600, Barkhurdar, the son of Abdur Rahman, was imprisoned for his attempt to kill Dalpat Ujjainia who had submitted to Prince Daniyal.[32]

We also find that some of the chieftains were hostile towards each other. Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur, two neighbouring chiefs, were bitter enemies on account of some family feud. During 1607–11, we find a bitter struggle between Raja Narayan Mal Ujjainia of Bhojpur and some of the Chero chiefs of Shahabad region.[33] With the help of the Mughals, Raja

Narayan Mal defeated the Cheros. In another case of dispute, Medini Rai, the Chero chief, attacked the Khokhra chieftaincy, defeated Raja Durjan Sal and ransacked his capital.[34] During 1719, we again find a tussle between two chieftaincies in which the Cheros forcibly occupied Tori, the territory of the Khokhras.[35] There were hostilities between the Betia chieftaincy and the Darbhanga Raj as well. The Betia chieftains also clashed with the hill *rajas* of Nepal over boundary disputes. Similarly, family feuds were a general phenomenon among the chieftains of the Bihar *suba*.

In our study of the chiefs, the Darbhanga Raj (chapter seven) provides us with some very interesting facts. We find that the founder of this chieftaincy, Mahesh Thakur, was made the *chaudhari* and *qanungo* of the *sarkar* of Tirhut in the *suba* of Bihar by a *farman* of Emperor Akbar.[36] In course of time, Jahangir and Shah Jahan granted the *chaudharai* and *qanungoi* of some additional *parganas* to the chiefs (of the Darbhanga Raj). Thereafter, in 1665, Aurang-zeb by a *farman*, conferred on Mahinath Thakur the *sadr zamindari* of the *sarkars* of Munger, Purnia and Tajpur, in addition to the *sarkar* of Tirhut.[37] By the same *farman*, these grants were also made hereditary. He was also favoured with a *khilat* and *mahi maratib*, which were usually conferred upon *rajas*.[38] Consequently, the *rajas* of the Darbhanga Raj acquired the status of hereditary chieftains during the period of Aurangzeb.

We have also made a brief study on the power and position of the chieftains of Bihar during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, the Mughal court was totally disturbed by faction politics and a number of subsequent Mughal emperors were either murdered or removed from the throne. In 1719, Muhammad Shah Rangeela finally succeeded to the throne of the Mughal empire. He was a pleasure-loving ruler who took hardly any interest in the administration. Prominent nobles who held charge of different *subas* did not want to return to the Mughal court due to the dangerous party politics prevailing there. Due to the weak Mughal successors at Delhi, the *subedars* of the *subas* began to rule the provinces in their own way. In the beginning, they ruled the provinces on behalf of the Mughal empire but later on, they declared themselves to be independent rulers. Murshid Quli Khan was the governor of Bengal when he declared himself the independent ruler of the province. He ruled as governor from 1717 to 1727. After his death, his son-in-law, Shuja-ud-din ruled Bengal till 1739. In the same year, Alivardi Khan deposed and killed Shuja-ud-din's son Sarfaraz Khan and made himself the nawab of Bengal.

The governors and deputy governors of Bengal and Bihar established peace and order in the province. They subjugated a number of refractory *zamindars* in Bihar during the first half of the

eighteenth century and forced them to pay *peshkash* or *malguzari* to the provincial authority. There was much pressure from the latter for the collection of revenues from the *zamindars*, which compelled them to rebel against the nawab. They submitted to the governors or deputy governors of Bengal and Bihar and gave valuable service to them. However, they did not get high *mansab* or any other patronage from the provincial authority. At the same time, the Marathas invasion and plunder of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa further created serious problems for the maintenance of law and order in these eastern provinces. This invasion not only created political instability but also economic instability there.

However, the situation changed after the battles of Plassey in 1757 and Buxar in 1764 when the British East India Company became the masters of eastern India, especially of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The British had an economic interest in India. They began to plunder eastern India accordingly. They put exorbitant demands on the nawabs, as well as on the *zamindars*. They ordered for the collection of a high rate of revenue on agricultural lands. The *zamindars* were not able to fulfil this demand. Although revenue was also collected during the Mughal period and it was some time high, the *zamindars* were not removed from their *zamindaris*. But the East India Company was different from the Mughals. They began to sell the lands of the *zamindars* who could not clear their dues. Slowly, their *zamindari* lands were auctioned off and a new class of *zamindars* was brought in who were the

highest bidders. The British introduced a new land settlement, the permanent settlement. In the name of mismanagement or misrule, the chieftains were overthrown from their *zamindari* by the British. By the end of the nineteenth century, almost all the chieftaincies like that of the Ujjainias, Kharagpur, Darbhanga, Hathwa, Betia, Khokhra, Palamau and Gidhaur had been taken over by them.

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Glossary

Altamgha — This is made up of two words. Al means 'the lineage from the daughter's side' and *tamgha* means 'produce'. This grant was the produce of the land property given by emperor to the ladies for their maintenance. Since in the ancient times, *al-tamgha* was reserved for ladies, it became known by this name. In the Medieval period, kings bestowed it on dervishes and others, too.

Amil — *Amil* means 'one who performs'. In official terminology, *amil* was a person who served the estates (*parganas*) as an *amani*. *Amani* is a person who maintained peace and tranquillity in the estate. He might realize the revenues from that estate.

Chakla — During seventeenth century the area of Reserved Land placed in charge of an officer called *chakladar*. In the eighteenth-century *chakla* was an administrative area in Bihar. The administrators (*mutasaddis*) created the *chakla* to facilitate revenue collection work. Due to a conglomeration of *parganas*, a *chakla* was bigger than a *sarkar*. A place where a number of prostitutes lived collectively was also called chakla.

Chaudhari — Literally the word *chaudhari* signifies a holder of four (shares or profits), as well as the headman of a village. It also denotes a holder of landed property classed with the *zamindars* and *taluqadars*. The *chaudhari* was an important official at the *pargana* level and was associated with the local land revenue administration in more ways than one. The office of the *chaudhari* appears to have been hereditary. Generally the office of the pargana's *chaudhari* was held by one person, but there was no uniform practice. There is evidence to show that there was sometimes more than one *chaudhari*. *Chaudhari* was an intermediary

	zamindar who collected land revenue from the peasants.
Dusturs	Customary reward or payment, perquisite.
Farman	A formal order issued by the emperor or king.
Faujdar	A magistrate or chief of armed men, some time in charge of a Qila.
Ghatwal	Person in charge of a pass in the mountains or of a landing place by a river.
Hasbul'l-hukum	*Hasbu'l-hukum* was an imperial order (*farman*), that the *huzur-nawises* (who writes the order) and the nobles wrote to the people, i.e. *zamindars* and communicated the order of the emperor to them.
Hasil	Actual production of revenue from agricultural land.
Hast-o-bud	*Hast-o-bud* is Persian word and is called *hal-hasil* in Arabic. It meant something that was actually obtained and actually produced. The actual yield is called *hast-o-bud* or *hal-hasil*.
Ijara	It means farming of revenue. Any one who held an estate on *ijara* was responsible for the profit or loss accruing from it.
Istimrari	It means 'to remain perpetually' and 'to demand permanence'. In the terminology of revenue officials (*ummal*), it means the grant of an estate (*makan*) to someone in perpetuity as an act of favour. The hakims, the high officials or the governor of the Province, too, on appropriate occasions, performed this act.
Istimrari muqarrari	The estates entrusted by the emperor or the *hakim* muqarrari in the pre-British times and under the British administration by the Governor-General to a person as an act of favour. The most significant feature of this tenure appeared to be that its grantee was conferred the rights of revenue collection whose amount remained fixed for a long time, and the grantee combined this right with the rights of maintenance of law and order. Thus, the grantee seemed to combine the *malguzari* rights with that of the *fauzdar*.
Jagir	*Jagir* is a contracted form of the word *ja-i gir*. It means a place for collecting the salary (*talab wa tankhwah*). Sometimes soldiers were given agricultural lands as

salaries during the Mughal period.

Jama — Assessed or estimated production of revenue from agricultural land.

Karoris — In the sixteenth century, this was the popular designation of the collector of reserved revenue, known officially as *amalguzar*. In the seventeenth century, it was used officially in this sense and also to denote the collector employed by an assignee.

Khalisa — Land reserved for the state as opposed to land assigned or granted to individuals.

Kham or *Kaghaz-i kham* — It is a document that was prepared on the very first day of revenue receipt, as an accounts ledger. It was tallied with the papers of the *patwari* and *riyaya*, and was called the pure account.

Khidmat — Duty.

Madad-i-Mash — A grant of land for subsistence.

Mahal — *Mahal* means 'an appropriate place'. During Em-peror Akbar's period, *mahal* was a revenue subdivision, corresponding usually, but not invariably, with *pargana*; and occasionally applied also to a head of miscellaneous revenue.

Mahi-Maratib — An honorary badge or insignia (flag) which was granted by the Mughal emperors to *zamindars* or other nobles.

Malguzar — One who pays rent or revenue.

Malguzari — Collection and payment of the revenue.

Malikana — *Malikana* means the proprietary right of the *zamindar*.

Mansab — It was a practice of kings that when they employed someone, they assigned a place commensurate with his status for his sustenance. The servant of the king was called *mansabdar*. There were various grades (ranks) of *mansab*: 20, 50, 100, 200, etc., and according to the rank of the *mansabdar*, land or cash was given. If the king wanted to elevate someone to the status of an *amir*, his *mansab* was increased gradually. With the increase in his *mansab*, cash, *sawars* (horses and horsemen) and *piyadas* (foot soldiers) assigned to *mansabdar* also increased. For example, a *mansab* denotes *zat* and *sawars* (i.e. 500/1,000) in which *zat* indicates the personal salary of a *mansabdar* and *sawars* indicate the given numbers of horses and horsemen to be maintained.

Mauza — A village was called *mauza* or *deh* in Persian and *gaon* in Hindi. In a wider

	sense, the *mauza* was called *qasba* or locality and imparted its name to the *pargana*.
Milki	This was a revenue-free land grant holder. He was the proprietor of land given to him as alms by king.
Milkiyat or *Malikana*	The proprietary right of the *zamindar*.
Muqaddam	*Muqaddam* is an Arabic word meaning 'one who is given precedence', a chief (*sardar*) or 'a leader of men'. The proprietor (*malik*) of a single village was called *muqqadam*. Someone who acquired a reputation of integrity in the village having sold his land was also called *muqaddam*.
Mutasaddis	A postman or head clerk and also the administrators.
Naib	Deputy. In the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, it denoted an officer sent to a province to perform the duties of the governor when the governor also held a court appointment or was employed on another duty.
Nakudi or Naqdi	*Nakudi* means realization of the revenue from the *zamindar* and *riyaya* in the form of cash.
Nankar	*Nankar* is a Hindi and Persian word meaning *nan* (bread) that was given in lieu of *kar* (service). It meant money or a piece of land that was granted by the king by way of perquisite for rendering a service and it was never without an imperial order of sanction (*sanad*).
Nazim	*Nazim* means the governor or *subedar* of a province (*suba*).
Nazrana	It was an *abwab* (cess). Whenever *hakims* gave a piece of land on *ijara* to anyone, they realized an amount of money from the *zamindars* and *musta'jirs*, over and above the amount stated in the written agreement.
Nishan	A formal order issued by the prince or governor of a province during the Mughal period.
Pargana	It was a smaller unit of revenue administration that contained a few villages. Khawaja Yasin in his book, the *Dastur-i-Malguzari*, mentions that the biggest village (*deh*) amongst villages comprising a *pargana* gave its name to the *pargana*. Such a village served as the *pargana* headquarters.
Parwana	It was a letter of conferment of a piece of

land, *milki* (a land given in charity) or *madad-i mash*. *Madad-i-mash* was a revenue free grant given to destitute and needy people by *wazir*, under the supervision of the emperor.

Peshkash — It was the money that was given to high officials and kings in advance for getting the work done. During the Mughal period, we find that whenever *zamindars* or defeated rulers submitted to the Mughals, they paid *peshkash* in cash or kind, either six monthly or annually. It included the rarities of the regions, likes, elephants, diamonds, gold, silver, etc.

Qabuliyat — This was a document. Whenever someone held *ijara* of an estate, he gave a written *qabuliyat* (agreement) for the amount he had accepted the *ijara* for.

Qanungo — A person who propounded rules and regulations of revenue collection, and who was fully conversant with the affairs of the estates and their *jama*', keeping their record for a hundred years or more. He participated as a legal representative in the process of revenue assessment and collection. The post held by the *qanungo* was referred to as *qanungoi*. It was considered to be a high post, was sanctioned by an imperial *sanad* and could not be abolished, says Yasin. The post of *qanungo*, though, was hereditary. The new incumbent had to obtain a fresh *sanad* from the government. During the eighteenth century, *qanungo* rights became an article of private property.

Rusum — *Rusum* was the revenue that was deducted from the *asl-jama*. It was a fixed sum and did not increase or decrease like the *abwab* (cess), such as *behri* and the like. *Rusum* was an amount conditional upon service (*khidmat*). One who performs a service gets *rusum*.

Ryot — Peasants who cultivate agricultural lands.

Sanad — This was a document that was meant for all types of imperial orders. It was a document of witness and testimony, which no one repudiated. It was of two types: *hukkami* and *badshahi*. *Badshahi* was one that bore the seals of the emperor and the *wazir*. When a person was given *milk, jagir, altamgha* or *madad-i ma'ash* grants by the emperor, the document was called *sanad-i-badshahi*. When the

governor of the province (*hakim*) gave the above-mentioned grants to someone, the document was known *hukkami*.

Sarkar — It was an administrative unit that contained not less than sixty or seventy *parganas*. If the number of *parganas*, Yasin states, was less than this limit, the unit was called *chakla*, not *sarkar*. Later on, Yasin makes the statement that a *sarkar* could contain any number of *parganas*.

Sayir — *Sayir* meant the revenue that was realized in addition to the revenue of land and its produce, such as revenue from trade, *ghats*, etc. *Sayir* also included various customs, duties and tolls collected from merchants for trade and commerce.

Suba — *Suba* has been described as a unit that comprised not less than two *sarkars* and not more than twenty. During the Mughal period, it was a province of the empire.

Ta'hhud — It is an Arabic word meaning 'to take the responsibility of a work upon oneself'. It was like an *ijara*.

Ta'lluqdar — A person who was assigned a few *mauzas* and undertook their revenue payment (*malguzari*). It also meant the acquisition of a village by someone through purchase. There was a difference between such a person and a *zamindar*. *Ta'alluqdar* was a person who held the land by purchase, while *zamindar* was the holder of hereditary land (*zamin-i maurusi*).

Tahsildar — *Tahsildar* was a person who was made in-charge of the revenue realization (*tahsil*) of a *mauza* or a pargana by the *hakim*. He was also the assistant of the *faujdar* and the *amil*.

Taluka — An estate comprising a number of villages. Tappa The collection of a few *mauzas*, which formed a big village or a big *mauza*.

Tashkhis — *Tashkhis* is an Arabic word meaning 'to ascertain anything in the *parganas'*, and 'to identify ailments of anything'. It meant the estimation of revenues of *mauzas* and *parganas*.

Thana — Police station, military post.

Wakil — In the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, the *wakil-i-dar* was apparently the highest ceremonial officer at the Delhi court. In the Mughal period, the *wakil* was the prime minister and superior to the *wazir* but the post was not always filled. When

it was vacant, the *wazir* was practically the prime minister.

Wazir

In the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the prime minister, who, in practice, had charge of the revenue and financial administration. During the Mughal period, when there was a *wakil*, the *wazir* was the Revenue and Finance Minister, sometimes described as *diwan*.

Zamindar and Zamindari

Khawaza Yasin has defined *zamindar* as 'the holder of land' and 'the protector of the land'. He also acknowledges the pre-Muslim period existence of this class, which, according to him, came to be called *zamindars* under the Muslim rule. Each one of them was issued a *sanad* and *nankar* fixed for them. Yasin further states that the word *zamindar* was used for a small person; a big *zamindar* was called *raja*.

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